UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

A Familial Analysis for 'Staying' in Alternative Religions

BY

Robert H. Cartwright

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SUBMITTED BY Robert H. Cartwright

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Abstract

Current debates regarding coercive social control in alternative religious organizations (AROs) centre on the issues of coercive conversion and deconversion. The much-contested concept of 'brainwashing,' in particular, has constrained discussions of coercion regarding the support or denial of this 'thought control' notion. This thesis, however, directs attention to the generally neglected area of coercion within long-term ARO membership. To this end, the thesis focuses on the common forms of intimate coercive control that pervade much of family experience. Building on the acknowledged 'familyhood' of many AROs, this paper makes explicit comparisons between family violence research and studies of AROs' coercive control. The comparison draws upon the conclusions of research into 'why do abused wives stay' in their relationships to understand 'staying' in situations of ARO abuse. Three of the major family violence theories serve to highlight both present similarities in family and ARO coercive control as well as suggest further avenues of comparative research. The structural theory of family violence suggests similarities of norms and structure; the family systems theory points to ARO member participation in coercive control, and the feminist family violence perspective elaborates on techniques of leader control. A separate discussion of the 'progress' of punitive control in AROs provides further 'family violence' links by

establishing similarities of escalating coercion in both institutions. The thesis concludes by establishing the common thread of 'empowerment/disempowerment' issues throughout the comparison between ARO coercion and family violence. Four concluding hypotheses suggest avenues of further research and testing, as well as summarize the main propositions of the thesis.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Central Research Question: 'Why do they Stay?'

In this thesis I apply the results of family violence research to social control within alternative religious organizations (AROs). Specifically, I formulate a 'familial' perspective for addressing social control and coercion within the context of long-term group commitment. The central research question of my thesis, therefore, is "why do members stay in abusive groups?" This same question (i.e. 'why do they stay?') is one that researchers of family violence often ask about battered adults who have the apparent ability to leave abusive marriages. I will employ the various answers that family researchers provide to this question in order to expand understanding of 'staying' in alternative religions. My application of family violence research to the area of alternative religions rests in the acknowledged role of alternative religions as "surrogate families" or "alternative kinship systems" (Robbins, 1988:46).

Definition of 'Alternative Religious Organizations'

The 'cult' label popularly is recognized as referring to unusual religious groups. The term also appears in newspaper descriptions of any exceptional group that holds to non-normative beliefs, frequently exacting an intense degree of commitment from members. As one writer says, 'cult' "generally denotes the controversial or stigmatized

aspects" of these groups (Robbins, 1988:17). Thus most writers prefer to employ less pejorative terms to identify their subject matter. Along this line they utilize such expressions as new religious movements, new religions, alternative religions, etc. Many groups, it should be noted, do not actually hold expressly 'religious' beliefs, such as therapy groups like Synanon. Still, most writers include such organizations under their definitional scheme.

My own term, like others, is a compromise. I describe the 'cults' as Alternative Religious Organizations. These groups are 'alternative' in offering novel doctrines or beliefs that exist in tension with the exterior world. Members of such groups, in fact, are adamant that their creed is unique and without compare, and reject the normative claims of larger society on that basis. These devotees quite often centre their world rejection in the authority of a charismatic figure. In believing the prophetic revelation of this person's message, ARO members acquire symbolic support for their radically exclusive stance. An important identifier of AROs, therefore, is their members' unwillingness to admit a separate source of authority beyond their immediate leader.

Most AROs are 'religious' in offering traditional forms of 'spiritual' meaning and engaging in mystical rituals. Those that are not particularly religious usually still involve 'non-rational' beliefs. The intensity of commitment

to their message permits me to include groups that are not explicitly religious. Many groups actually appear to develop more explicitly religious identifiers (e.g. doctrine-like principles and mystical leadership) over the long-term even when they start out as ostensible 'therapy' or 'self-improvement' organizations. In this sense I include 'non-religious' organizations in my definition.

Finally, since many of these groups are not large movements, but smaller 'face-to-face' societies, I prefer the term 'organization.' This term also comes closer to my concern with intimate 'family-like' associations and the processes of intimate control and coercion. Alternative religions that 'organize' around principles of mutual self-improvement and the obedience of a charismatic figure essentially are self-focused groups. Their concerns largely address self-improvement and interpersonal relationships. In this regard, then, I do not employ the term 'movement' that implies an entity with numerous branches focusing on a societal mandate. Admittedly, I discuss some larger organizations that bear resemblance to 'movements' but my interest primarily resides in the 'enclosed' nature of communal ARO existence. Even these larger organizations betray a high degree of inner-direction in strong 'maintenance of faith' mechanisms for the rank and file members. The markedly enclosed nature of these modern

'cults' supports the utility of my attention to 'staying' and abuse.

Contribution to the Sociology of Alternative Religions

The current debates among sociologists concerning social control in alternative religions motivates my comparison to abusive family situations. Most researchers, for example, doubt that abusive forms of social control exist to any notable extent in alternative religions. Furthermore, these discussions of social control almost exclusively focus on alleged forms of coercive conversion and deconversion, and ignore possible coercion of the committed. Consequently, most studies examine processes involved in 'entry' and 'exit' rather than 'staying.' Thus I draw upon familial studies for two reasons. First, this body of research establishes that long-term abusive forms of control do exist in a predominant social institution (i.e. the family). Second, researchers note that alternative religions frequently employ familial themes as a deliberate attempt to promote cohesion, and more importantly, are structurally similar to the family.

One of the long-standing barriers to general acceptance of this 'commonplace' family coercion was the disbelief that such levels of abuse could continue without victims publicly proclaiming their plight and leaving. The research community's answers to 'why do they stay?,' therefore, were

significant factors in validating the charges that widespread intimate abuse does exist in the family. In my perspective I propose that these answers have similar utility for understanding maintenance of faith mechanisms and processes ('staying') in alternative religions.

I will draw upon the concepts and findings of the structural, systems, and feminist approaches in the family violence literature as a resource of acknowledged control methods and processes to establish the validity of my argument. Although my discussion will include positive factors that motivate and reward members rather than constrain them, I primarily will address negative controls that operate in these groups. The established work on AROs already has dealt with the positive and functional influence of familyhood.

Methodology

In this thesis I employ one stream of sociological research to inform issues in another--that is, I apply conclusions from family violence literature to the literature on alternative religions. My motivation for this comparison originated in similarities of situation that I perceived for victims of abuse in both institutions. Thus I originally conceived of my study as involving a general comparison of both victims' experiences. In delving into the literature on family violence, however, I found that there

existed a diversity of perspectives on conjugal violence. After reviewing both literatures I decided to specifically analyze the issue of long-term social control in alternative religion through the 'eyes' of family violence theories.

My resulting 'family-violence' perspective for alternative religions essentially follows a 'metaphor' approach to organizational analysis. One author notes that "[m]etaphor is often just regarded as a device for embellishing discourse, but its significance is much greater than this. For the use of metaphor implies **a way of thinking** and **a way of seeing** that pervade how we understand our world generally" (Morgan, 1986:12 [emphasis in original]). Morgan explains that "[w]e use metaphor whenever we attempt to understand one element of experience in terms of another. Thus, metaphor proceeds through implicit or explicit assertions that A **is** (or is like) B." (Morgan, 1986:13). Although Morgan presented these comments in reflections on the use of metaphors in organizational modelling, they succinctly describe my familial violence approach to alternative religions.

Morgan's premise is that the use of various metaphors for comparison to institutions provides new and challenging insights in organizational analysis. Those insights then serve as the tools for new approaches for the management and design of businesses and similar organizations (Morgan, 1986:331). Each metaphor, however, only provides a one-sided

perspective for organizational analysis so Morgan advocates the use of multiple perspectives. My perspective follows this advice in analyzing (Morgan also calls it 'reading') alternative religious organizations through the structural, systems, and feminist 'metaphors' drawn from the family violence literature. I limit my perspective to 'reading' AROs as abusive families for I regard processes of 'intimate control' as uniquely similar in these two institutions. Thus my perspective provides the 'tools' for 'reading' intimate control processes that sustain members' commitment in AROs. As well, I challenge the implicit 'perspectives' that researchers have employed in ARO research and theory.

In the spirit of Morgan's technique of metaphorical analysis each of my perspectives provides separate avenues for interpreting 'why members stay.' As Morgan states, "organizations are complex and paradoxical phenomena that can be understood in many different ways" (Morgan, 1986: 13). Consequently, each component of my perspective explains 'staying' in distinct terms. First, in the structural approach, I examine standards and expectations of privacy and unity that legitimate coercive controls. Secondly, from the systems perspective, I propose that members are active participants in maintaining abusive patterns of interaction. Thirdly, through the eyes of 'feminist' analysis, in apparent opposition to the systems approach, I focus on the leader's power of control. Finally, in a chapter on

charismatic control, I outline the progressive nature of abuse in AROs, again from a 'generally' familial approach.

In the concluding chapter, I establish the importance of empowerment/disempowerment issues to 'staying' in situations of ARO abuse. ARO members experience such disempowerment as an aspect of intimate control, where they themselves hold a strong internal loyalty to the empowered group or leader that exercise control over them. Finally, I propose four research hypotheses for 'staying' in AROs that are a 'condensation' of my 'family abuse' perspective. These hypotheses summarize the findings of my comparative literature review and offer a concrete theoretical springboard for the empirical testing and expansion of my perspective.

Sources

A. Family Violence Literature

Since my thesis takes the form of a comparative literature review, my selection of sources is crucial to the strength of my familial abuse argument. Various theories exist that explain family violence, including: resource theory, general systems theory, ecological perspective, exchange theory, patriarchy, sociobiology, economic, and sociocultural explanation (Gelles, 1987:42-43). After wide-spread reading in the field, however, I determined that the

structural, feminist, and systems theories were most representative of current family violence theory and research. Some scholars upon whom I draw even write from each of these three theories at various times, which further indicates their importance. Lewis Okun's Woman Abuse (1986) was of particular assistance in my selection of representative theories. He provides a comprehensive summary of family violence research, and also notes that certain authors employ each of these three perspectives.

The structural position encompasses, to a certain degree, resource, exchange, economic, and sociocultural theories about family violence. Adherents to the structural view have at times employed these different approaches, likely because these theories involve discussions of structural norms and forces that determine individual action. The structural approach, in the form of a 'resource theory' study, actually began sociological study into family violence. Gelles's 1974 study of family violence proposed that husbands with a lack of traditional male resources employed greater force or violence in an effort to maintain their role (Gelles, 1987:42). Many of my 'structural' resources, therefore, are works written or edited by Gelles and/or his mentor and colleague, Murray Straus.

The systems approach to family violence is not represented by as many works or authors as the feminist or structural approaches. It is a relatively new approach to

the family violence literature. Proponents of this method believe that it bridges the 'violence in the family' approach of structural theory with the 'male violence against women' emphasis of feminist theory. The systems approach incorporates structural influences, individual family interactions, and factors of male dominance in an effort to provide a more even-handed approach than competing theories. Two of the few works in this area include Giles-Sims (1983) and Shupe, Stacey, and Hazlewood (1987). I use these two works, as well as shorter articles that appear elsewhere. Family therapists also are proponents of the systems approach for its utility for both counselling and analyzing abusive families.

The feminist and patriarchal approaches are essentially the same perspective under different labels. The feminist term invokes notions of women's advocacy and a general concern for righting the wrongs of male-dominated society. Thus patriarchal family violence theory especially focuses on the male oriented family and marital relationships as the root of domestic violence. "Feminism is the most important theoretical approach to conjugal violence/woman abuse; a majority of writers in the field espouse feminist views..." (Okun, 1986:100). Okun goes on to list several authors in this field, some of whom I rely on for both my feminist perspective chapter and other sections of this work, including Martin, Walker, Dobash and Dobash, and Davidson.

I rely heavily on Walker's theory of 'learned helplessness' for my chapter on feminist analysis. Walker's theory is controversial, yet it remains a cohesive argument for answering 'why do abused women stay.' Okun mentions Straus as well, who usually is connected to the structural viewpoint. I also drew from 'non-professional' writers like Davidson and Pizzey. These two authors' insights and knowledge are respected by sociologists, particularly because their personalized accounts provide an 'immediate' description of family violence.

B. Sociology of Alternative Religions Literature

My review of the sociology of alternative religions began with Robbins's Cults, Converts, and Charisma (1988). This volume provides a thorough summary of the findings and directions of sociological attention to 'cults' from the 1960s to the present. Robbins's overview allowed me to understand key issues of the social control debates among observers of AROs. The dissent particularly focuses on the alleged thought reform techniques of social control by AROs, a debate that I describe in more detail in my introductory chapter. The major 'cult' writers attempt to debunk these charges of alleged 'brainwashing' by ARO groups.

My review of this 'brainwashing' literature included such major sources as The Brainwashing/Deprogramming Controversy (1983) edited by Bromley and Richardson and

Strange Gods: The Great American Cult Scare (1981) by Bromley and Shupe. Bromley and Richardson's book provides several articles with various approaches to the argument.

These sources included some discussion on the familial nature of alternative religions. For a more specific discussion of this theme, I rely on several papers in Cults and the Family (1982) by Kaslow and Sussman. The issues raised in this volume assisted me in selecting other widely-cited texts. Of particular use for a wide variety of 'control' and 'familyhood' issues is Kanter's seminal and very influential work on communes. I also selected from other authors who address communal living under the obvious influence of Kanter's writings.

Weber's concept of charisma is, of course, enormously influential. I cite from some of his major works on charisma, as well as related material on charisma scattered throughout the ARO literature. The nature of charismatic leadership emerges as notably significant to my 'familial' argument. Janet Jacobs's work is most crucial to my understanding in connecting charisma to abuse and 'family' factors in AROs. Her focus on abuse in follower-leader relationships is one of the few studies to address this topic in the sociology of religion literature. Jacobs's work holds greatest import in dealing with abuse and coercion without appealing to the generally discredited concept of 'brainwashing.'

Coser's description of 'greedy institutions,' like many other outstanding works, does not fall into neat subject classifications. His treatise on 'greedy institutions' bridges matters of concern in several areas, including family studies and alternative religions. His conclusions often echo and/or expand upon those statements of scholars in both these areas, and given the date of his volume, appear to presage others' work in the areas that I address. Most importantly, I use Coser's volume because it incorporates institutional relationships of power and domination in structural analysis.

Social Control, Alternative Religions and 'Family:' A Review

In this chapter I argue that ARO scholarship is inattentive to the question of why members stay in abusive AROs. In order to set the stage for my own argument, I present an overview of the social control debates among sociologists of religion, pointing especially to the emphasis upon coercive conversion and deconversion. I also connect the corresponding scholarly inattention to the issue of coercion against committed members with the current functional approach to familial descriptions of alternative religions.

This overview will support my formulation of a new familial abuse perspective for interpreting faith maintenance in alternative religions. Again I emphasize that this perspective responds to the relative lack of attention to coercive processes of faith maintenance (between conversion and deconversion), that currently exists in sociology of religion research. By focusing attention on issues of alternative religion's violence through directions provided by the family violence literature, I will extend the applicability of well-established social theory.

Social Control and Alternative Religions

Discussion of social control and coercion within alternative religious organizations (AROs) or 'cults' remains a controversial topic. To the general public,

'cults' appear to threaten and challenge dominant North American values, especially since the popular media usually sensationalize their deviant teachings (Beckford, 1985:5). Devious and coercive practices popularly are identified as the means by which these groups maintain members' allegiance to such deviant standards. The popular answer to 'why do members stay?' in AROs, therefore, refers to alleged authoritarian mind control methods employed by group leaders. Concerned parents, official religious leaders, and others in mainstream culture continue to be troubled by the perceived threat of these groups. Many academics, however, consider the organized expression of this public concern to be the more relevant social control issue. These scholars focus on social control as applied against, rather than within, 'cults.'

Societal control exerted against AROs began in the mid 1970s when parents whose children were 'cult' members formed counter-cult organizations (CCOs). As an opposition to the alternative religious organizations (AROs), these watch-dog groups monitored 'cult' activities and advocated greater legal limitations and surveillance over them. The sudden and totalistic conversion of youth to these unusual groups led parents to draw upon early thought reform and brainwashing psychiatric literature for explanations (i.e. Lifton, 1961; Sargant, 1959; Schein, 1961). This literature focuses on Communist indoctrination procedures employed during the Cold

War. For the counter-cult members, the new religious 'cold war' appeared more frightening than its 1950s political predecessor. Their children, although not POWs, were 'victims', and the battles were fought on home territory rather than on foreign soil. At stake in this new conflict were the minds, allegiances, and perhaps souls (many parents would have said) of these youth. In response to the perceived 'thought-reform' or 'brainwashing' threat, parents advocated coercive forms of de-conversion through kidnapping and intense confrontation. Families pitted themselves against alternative religions.

'Cults versus the family' is a popular theme around which to organize the 'cult' versus 'countercult' controversy (Beckford, 1982; Kilbourne & Richardson, 1982; Shupe & Bromley, 1980). Central to this approach are the allegedly negative value-judgements of counter-cult sentiment. For example, Shupe and Bromley titled their book The New Vigilantes (1980) in reference to the "unhappy families" who first formed an "anti-cult movement" (Shupe & Bromley, 1980:13). These authors assert that CCM groups are an organized 'social control' response to 'cultic' rebellion against conventional culture. Their argument insists that the brainwashing charge is part of social control and repression of new religious movements, and that 'cult' conversion techniques are not 'thought reform.' Thus they regard counter-cult accusations of 'thought reform' or 'mind

control' as reflecting and invoking a deviant designation for AROs. From their perspective, it is not coincidental that parents are the defenders of 'order,' since they serve as primary socializers into conventional culture (Shupe & Bromley, 1980:38).

Much of the virulence of the counter-cult opposition arises from alternative religions' apparent challenge to traditional familial roles (Kilbourne & Richardson, 1982:93). By advocating an 'all or nothing' commitment, the new religions separate devotees from their families and often serve as substitute families themselves. They even establish fictive kinship systems that are purported to be of greater spiritual validity than families of origin (Shupe & Bromley, 1980:41). As well, these groups offer affective ties, rules of behaviour, and roles for members that are similar to family interaction (Robbins,1988:46). Writers often suggest that this "familyhood" of groups is a route to resolving the problems and inadequacies of the devotees' family of origin (Marciano, 1982:110). For these families, the shocking loss of their children's loyalties to 'familial' usurpers legitimated the 'brainwashing' charge. Their assertion of coercive thought control implicitly rejects the familial model in favour of an authoritarian interpretation (with almost 'supernatural' power alleged for leaders) of ARO roles and relationships. Most academics, however, view this 'familyhood' as an active reality and

positive factor in AROs, so they regard the brainwashing allegations sceptically.

Debates among academics concerning coercive aspects of AROs do exist, yet most scholars affirm that "the burden of proof is on those who proffer the brainwashing hypothesis" (Richardson,1983:11). One author, though, notes that a crucial gap in the study of alternative religions results from the preoccupation with 'brainwashing.' "Conversion into religious sects is voluntary in a restricted, legalistic sense, but the emphasis on voluntariness tends to divert attention from various mechanisms of control of a coercive nature that can be applied once individuals have volunteered themselves" (Taylor, 1983:90).

Taylor's comment refers to coercive "maintenance of faith" procedures that receive little attention by most scholars. Sociologists give priority to debating the existence of coercive proselytization (brainwashing) and the validity of coercive exiting (deprogramming) but in so doing neglect analyses of group practices that sustain committed members (staying). Thus a voluntaristic model of conversion and de-conversion obscures the possibilities of coercive commitment processes in ongoing membership. Similarly, the identification of the aforementioned 'familyhood' of AROs as an entirely benign and beneficent element neglects possible features of 'familial coercion.'

To sum up, sociologists address little attention to 'why do members stay' in attending to coercive conversion and deconversion. The familial aspects of AROs offer potential insight into long-term affiliation, but the focus on 'cults vs. families' overshadows development of the familial analogy in that direction.

A Familial Abuse Perspective for Answering 'Why do they Stay?'

The sociological literature uses a simplistic and functional view of 'family' in identifying 'familial' patterns in AROs. My perspective will further develop existing sociological discussions of AROs as substitute families by including approaches taken from the family violence literature. I argue that recent research on intrafamily violence and spousal abuse challenges the functional view of the family employed by scholars of AROs. Family violence, particularly long-term spouse abuse, is (as one author notes), a form of 'coercive control' (i.e. thought reform), whereby a "controller" employs greater "power" over a "dependent" (Okun, 1986:113). The existence of these forms of coercive control needs examination in AROs, in order to better understand the less 'beneficial' aspects of this familial-like group involvement. My new perspective 'rescues' the counter-cult's concern with social

control and coercion ("brainwashing") and places it within the context of long-term group commitment. In short, I answer 'why do they stay' by connecting the acknowledged familial nature of AROs to the previously ignored family violence literature. Thus I avoid sensationalized and 'mystical' accusations of mind control in relying on 'commonplace' forms of control.

Again, my perspective employs the social-structural, systems, and feminist theories from the family abuse literature. I also employ Weber's concept of 'charisma' to address similar processes of progressive social control in AROs and the family. First, the social-structural tradition reveals common features of social location and structure shared by the 'family' and communal AROs that allow and even mandate violence. Both family and ARO members, therefore, regard abusive control as part of ensuring unity and obedience. Second, the systems approach shows the role of an entire family or religious group in maintaining its own isolation and leader dependency. I also will relate systems concepts of 'boundaries' and the 'closed system' (as developed for familial abuse) to abusive patterns of interaction in communal AROs. Members stay because these patterns of interaction serve as a safeguard and separation from a hostile world.

In the case of the feminist position, I will connect the specific concept of "learned helplessness" to

authoritarian charismatic leadership in AROs. The theory of "learned helplessness" describes the apparent powerlessness of battered women as a 'normal' response to intermittent reinforcement (unpredictable behaviour) by the batterer (Walker, 1989:47). Authoritarian and erratic control that continually keeps 'dependents' at a disadvantage (and in the relationship) are key similarities between charismatic leaders and 'controllers' in abusive relationships. Finally, I will relate the progressive nature of charismatic control in AROs that Jacobs (1989) describes to the displacement of love by battering in marital relations. In both institutions an ideal of romantic love and affective bonding is superseded by abusive control. For abused members of both groups, however, the affective bonds enmesh them in the group and they 'stay' despite the abuse.

In the review that follows I will further explore issues of coercive control and familyhood with regard to AROs. Scholars of AROs largely treat these two subjects as exclusive realms. Thus in rejecting sensationalistic 'brainwashing' coercion they ignore possible 'pedestrian' forms of control. In contrast, the scholars of family violence have developed diverse and cogent theories of abusive social dominance.

Review of ARO research

Scholars, particularly in sociology and psychology, advocate an objective treatment of alternative religious movements' theology and practices. Their attempts at an academic balance to the 'cult controversy,' however, still follows the agenda set by the ACM and media on 'entry and exit.' Robbins, for example, realizes that "the brainwashing thesis has been enormously influential, even among sociologists who tend to reject it and for whom it has set the agenda of inquiry and discourse" (Robbins, 1988:79). Those who reject 'brainwashing' declare coercive belief adjustment for both 'entry' and 'exit' to be neither socially desirable nor actually possible (Bromley & Shupe,1981:4). The central topics in that rejection, therefore, are debunking of the myths of magical 'brainwashing' abilities and invalidation of the practice of 'deprogramming.'

Scholars on 'cults' recognize power and domination as issues in isolated communal groups, but in avoiding 'brainwashing' sensationalism they underplay the extent of these factors. In examining the mass suicide of the "People's Temple" in Guyana, two authors acknowledge that "[o]f course, there are cases where leaders do exert ongoing personal control, as Jim Jones did, but this is not usual" (Bromley & Shupe, 1981:145). They suggest that several factors mitigate extreme leader control, including: communal

groups' "self-sustaining" nature, "very intense peer pressure," "factionalism," and frequent challenges to authority by "dissenters." They find that the overall pattern of leader control in different AROs "var[ies] considerably" (Bromley & Shupe, 1981:141-145).

The multitude of society's familial arrangements also exhibit this variation of control and moderation of influence. Yet conjugal violence and abuse remains an unfortunate reality and continuing social problem. Arguments for the 'exceptionality' of leaders' coercion and authority ignore the on-going coercion of the home. Like familial violence, coercion in alternative religions is the result of culturally patterned 'familial' forms of intense interaction.

Use of Terms

I refer to various control factors and processes in both families and alternative religions as 'coercive.' My use of this term reflects my position on two issues. The first issue appears in the brainwashing debate, where scholars reject the 'thought control' explanation since they see little evidence of "physical coercion and brutality" (Robbins, 1988:73). The second issue emerges from the family violence literature, where some "[s]ocial scientists, who are fond of quantifying reality" are reluctant to identify psychological injury "as real and damaging as a physical one" (Steffen, 1982:59).

Students of control usually define coercion as "the use of a purely physical force or process" (Gibbs, 1989:52-53). I side with the family violence definition of coercion, however, which includes any form of emotional and psychological neglect or abuse. Family researchers note that such non-physical forms of coercion invariably accompany and even predominate over physical coercion. Furthermore, there exists the problem of definitions of family coercion.

> Research on family violence has demonstrated the difficulty in distinguishing between legitimate acts [of force] and illegitimate acts [of violence], since offenders, victims, bystanders, and agents of social control often accept and tolerate many acts that would be considered illegitimate if committed by strangers (Gelles, 1987:32).

As I will discuss in my chapter on the social structural perspective, much of this difficulty emerges from the relationship of norms of family unity to family violence. In other words, patterns of family control and coercion reside on a continuum. Both externally manipulated and internally held forms of control are the root of family style coercion. Because of this relationship, I deal with both 'control' and 'coercion' in describing the familial reasons for 'staying' in abusive religions and in religions where abuse occurs. Like the family, not all AROs are abusive, but each ARO contains the roots of 'family' violence.

Thus I define 'abuse' as the manipulation of power that is detrimental to certain members and is beneficial to the

manipulator(s). 'Coercion' includes all those mechanisms for achieving such abusive ends. I also include 'conflict' in my discussion of 'family violence' in AROs. Conflict is not exclusive from the issue of abuse and coercion within the context of long-term membership. Conflict occurs when those with more or less equal power within the ARO attempt to exercise control over each other. To the extent that one may hold or attain some degree of greater power over the other, they 'coerce' each other. In my chapter on systems explanation, I develop the background for such situations of 'conflict.' Noteworthy in systems conflict is the possibility that the larger group or leader(s) benefit from members' conflicts. Within the context of group beliefs and relationships such 'mutually abusive' interactions serve to maintain (more than disrupt) the power of the ARO.

I assert, therefore, that scholars inattention to various practices of 'intimate control' in AROs obscures actual abuses. These practices are diverse. I do include physical coercion (including assault, deprivation of regular sustenance and shelter, and punitive physical or religious 'tasks') as the first and most obvious practice. Other coercive practices, however, do not follow from the usual 'control theory' definition. Emotional and psychological abuse, primarily involving the debasement of the follower's identity, is a second coercive practice common to AROs and families. Economic coercion through group or leader control

of individual finances is an important third method for maintaining devotees'(or spouses') dependency. Total disbursement of one's monetary resources ensures commitment and the reduction of viable alternatives to group affiliation. Social isolation, both from society and within the group (shunning) is a fourth form of coercion. Isolation from society affirms group boundaries and interaction and emphasizes the dependence of the individual. In fact, analysts of family violence regard isolation from the 'outside' to be so severe a form of coercion that they term it 'social battering' (Okun, 1986:69 Isolation from fellow members (shunning) once one is entrenched in such a system also is a strong control mechanism. The personal sense of rejection and loneliness is intense when one's solitary source of affective support is severed. "If you accept the group's claims to be the only true religion, expulsion (i.e., excommunication) is the worst possible punishment" (McGuire, 1987:171).

Benefitting the Group

A review of the familial comparison to new religions is important for developing a more balanced picture of this 'intense interaction.' The review will support my argument for that comparison as well as establish points of weakness in the structure of the current analogy. Specifically, the

discussions of AROs as families omit acknowledged coercive dynamics in familial social relationships.

Rosabeth Kanter's work in the area of 'commitment mechanisms' is a conceptually significant starting point. Her study of late nineteenth century and circa 1970 communes develops significant ideas on how commitment is socially constructed. Rather than an amorphous psychological factor that develops group solidarity, individual commitment results from group practices. In a 1976 essay, Kanter notes that "[m]any groups...sought to define themselves as families, use[d] images of brother and sister in describing the relationships among members and sometimes [took] a single family name" (1976:149).

The connection, by various authors, of 'familyhood' to commitment processes is important to understanding 'sustained involvement' or 'staying' in groups. Kanter's comment indicates that the development of such fictive kinship systems strengthen intra-group ties through affective bonding. A second writer found that for new converts to the Unification church (i.e. the Moonies)--an explicitly family based group--"an intensification of affective bonds" replaced "familial and friendship ties lost or damaged" upon joining (Solomon,1983:171). A third writer, analyzing the opposite situation--deconversion--found a more specific connection between affective bonds and staying in groups. Her sample of ex-members spoke of their primary

attachment to the group leader. The dyadic 'love' relation, especially in the form of love of follower for leader, was an essential basis for their loyalty to their group. Separation from the group only was complete when departing members broke emotional ties with the leader (Jacobs, 1987:306).

Affective bonds and familial systems also support the hierarchical structure of new religions. Jacobs, for example, found that leaders' basis for their power and authority over followers existed in their role as a "paternal guardian, a potentially powerful source of love, knowledge, and protection" (Jacobs, 1987:306-307). In Lofland's seminal study of the early Unification/Moonie church, Miss Lee (who was first North American missionary/leader) had extensive authority over long-term members. Matters of personal hygiene and deportment, in addition to more 'spiritual' issues, were under her guidance. "[S]he was their 'mother in faith,' with the responsibility of raising her 'spiritual children'" (Lofland, 1977:216). Later studies of the Unification/Moonie church note the central importance of the fictive family to its structure and ideology. Members believe that Reverend Moon and his wife are their "True Parents" and eventually create their own new families within the church (Fichter, 1983).

The familial theme in new religions supports emotional bonds among followers and between leader-follower. It also serves to buttress the authority of the leader, not only through the power of emotional dependence but also in providing a legitimation of the leader's authority. Constructing a parental authority for the leader maintains the right of the leader to direct intimate details of devotees' lives. Thus, followers as 'children' come to attribute their entire 'spiritual' development to the guidance and power of their faith parents (Kent & Mytrash, 1990:35).

Functional Explanation:Benefiting Society

In attempting to place new religions within the context of larger society, sociologists use what is more or less a functional explanation. They consider AROs to be a form of "mediating structure" between the nuclear family and general society. This theory begins by describing the intimate warmth of social relations in the family as incongruent with the reality of society as the 'lonely crowd.' One solution to this failure of affective support is alternative religions, which "mediate" between the intimacy of the home and the impersonal nature of outside social existence (Robbins & Anthony, 1982:66; Robbins, 1988:46; Dunphy, 1972:34). Robbins explains that "...'mediating structures' provide the opportunity for close, face-to-face contact with

other persons with whom one shares common sentiments and solidarity" (1988:46). Again, the familial motif emerges as an aspect of this societal role: "Social movements are often effective mediating structures because they emphasize universal values and often integrate these meanings into 'familial' or diffusely affective and expressive patterns of interpersonal relationships" (Robbins, 1988, p.46). Urbanization replaced the smaller communities that formerly provided this emotional support and clearly articulated values, so that the disjunction between family and society is now a large one.

Comments from the current literature on new religions and alternative group living reflect this functional perspective. A preface to discussion of 'family' in the Unification church notes that "the most visible of the new religious movements are organized communally, and the communal group serves many of the functions of families" (Bromley, Shupe & Oliver 1982:119). Other authors describe 'alternative' communal living as one of the "'functional equivalents'" of the extended family (Scanzoni & Scanzoni, 1981:286). As an alternative family form, the communal arrangement can "fulfill many of the functions traditionally fulfilled by the extended kin" (Scanzoni & Scanzoni, 1988:288). The authors of this text list these functions as including affection, mutual interdependence, community-

building rituals, migration possibilities (adding new members), and influence and control over group members.

A Missing Component: The "Other" Side of the Familial Coin

The family metaphor is useful in understanding the positive or 'successful' functions of communally organized alternative religions, yet it is a one-sided perspective on the community experience of such groups. In implementing a functional familial comparison sociologists disregard components of abuse, coercion, power differentials, and conflict. Failure to contemplate the 'family' as a problematic institution within society suggests an optimism reminiscent of the 1950s image of family life.

That optimistic belief in the patriarchal ideal has prompted generally positive discussion of the familial development of affective bonds. Like proponents of traditional family unity, sociologists of religion state that it is 'good' for both the individual and the group that fictive kinship strengthens the commitment to the community. The earlier reference, however, to Jacobs's (1987) work on the role of affective bonding to charismatic leaders is an exception. She notes that in many Christian based AROs: "abuse is often justified by a norm of discipline within the 'religious family' which sanctions domestic violence and allows the spiritual father to punish his children in order to secure their relationship to god" (Jacobs, 1987:300).

Elsewhere, Jacobs explicitly connects the failure of the patriarchal family ideal to, ironically, the popularity of the alternative religious movements (Jacobs, 1989:3-5). These religions offered the possibility of experiencing the familial ideal as formulated by popular mythology.

Like the nuclear family, however, the 'religious family' produced experiences of abuse along with emotional bonds. Jacobs's work points to the abuse of both 'positive' aspects (i.e., legitimation of authority and intra-group ties) of the emotional bonding process. Firstly, members experienced physical cruelties and psychological abuse at the hands of their leaders, thus betraying their followers' submission to leaders' paternal authority. Secondly, they experienced the failure of their special relationship of 'love' with the leader, an experience Jacobs terms "the most painful realization of all" (Jacobs, 1987:302).

The discussion of alternative religions as "mediating structures" also is unsatisfactory in most scholarly accounts. The nuclear family and small face-to-face communities are assumed to be innately most appropriate to human interaction. Toleration of violence in isolated communities, the pervasiveness of intense community social control, and lack of options for deviant members all are aspects of small communities that the comparison overlooks. These same negative elements particularly are ignored in accounts by 'alternative religions' scholars who mention the

nuclear family. The wealth of literature developed over the last twenty years on family violence and spouse abuse apparently is conceptually compartmentalized as irrelevant to the familial nature of new religions.

A statement regarding communal groups sums up the almost naively positive view of communally based alternative groups as 'functional alternatives' to families. In an article on success in communes, one author states that:

> Communal living is sometimes called a 'variant family form.' One future project might be a review of the literature on family (or marital) 'success,' a compilation of alleged causal factors, and a comparison of that list with the predictors cited in the literature on communal success. By noting the degree of overlap between the two bodies of literature, one could explore the extent of the parallels between family and communal dynamics (Cornfield, 1983:125).

Cornfield's goal is the obverse of my own. I too wish "to explore the extent of the parallels between family and communal dynamics" in answering 'why do abused members stay,' but with attention to power and coercion, not "success." That attention will stress 'negatives' in order to properly redress the omission of coercive control in AROs. I suggest that frequently the endurance of communal AROs is similar to many long-term marital relationships. It is more accurate to state that their apparent 'success' is a result of members 'staying' in abusive relationships.

Incorporating the Family Violence Literature

The incorporation of 'coercive control' into the familial analogy will draw from the family violence literature, which recognizes the basic paradox, or 'irony' of family existence. Two authors describe this paradox as rooted, on the one hand, in cultural values and mode of family organization that promote love, support, and happiness. On the other hand, "because of this very same mode of organization and because of the influence of these same cultural values, conflict and violence coexist with these more benign aspects of married life" (Hotaling & Straus, 1980:10). The level of this violence and conflict should not be underestimated, for a pioneering sociologist of family violence terms the family the "most violent civilian group in our society" (Straus, 1980:24). Studies of that violence reveal "many incidents" of on-going abuse, primarily by men against women, performed in an "incredible variety of ways" (Stacey & Shupe, 1983:29).

In applying this paradox to alternative religions, a "family violence" perspective does not discard the benefit realized by 'familiality.' It does incorporate, however, the concerns articulated by the ACM and various scholars who argue that long-term abuses do occur in AROs. The 'family violence' perspective is particularly relevant to communally based, charismatically led small groups. Intense relations, intimate face-to-face interaction, social isolation, and a

dynamic of powerful leaders and dependent followers all contribute to a familial style of coercion.

Chapter II. Social Structural Perspective

Overview

The social structural position on family abuse answers the question, 'why do abused individuals stay?,' by pointing to cultural standards of family unity and privacy that ironically support family violence. These standards legitimate violence as a form of control over family members. Such norms and expectations also operate in AROs, so I will expand upon eleven structural factors of intimate violence (Gelles and Straus, 1978) and apply these to alternative religions. Like the family, violence in AROs results from similar themes of intimacy and privacy.

In connection with this structural argument, I will draw upon Coser's (1974) work on 'greedy institutions.' Like the social-structural description, Coser identifies features of the family institution that historically have demanded total commitment from a socially dependent and isolated member. In particular, I will use Coser's description of the institutional demands placed upon the roles of 'wife' and of 'servant.' I will argue that as 'greedy institutions' AROs exert similar familial demands upon their followers, placing them in positions of dependence similar to wives and servants.

The social structural answer to 'why abused family members stay' asserts that norms and standards operating in AROs serve to legitimate violent and abusive forms of social

control. Like family members, members of AROs 'stay' because they consider their institution to be 'special' with unique standards and expectations that justify such intimate forms of control. The social-structural approach to family violence also serves two other purposes in my perspective. First, it affirms a "social process" approach to familial coercion against a purely psychological treatment of the issue. Secondly, it permits clear comparison of the structural basis for 'familial' violence in both families and communal alternative religions.

The Early Social-Structural Challenge to Psychological Explanation

Gelles's groundbreaking focus on violence between adult 'marrieds' begins the exploration of social explanation in an area of previously psychological concern (Gelles, 1974). Both the psychological and sociological traditions asked in regard to long-term victims (women) of familial abuse: 'why do they stay?' Psychologists identified a pathological tendency to masochism that sustained a woman's persistent participation in an unhealthy relationship (Stacey & Shupe, 1983:9; Walker, 1988:14). Social explanations that rose to counter this psychological approach include isolation of the family from social control, "culture of violence" theories, women's economic dependence, and women's commitment to the relationship (Gelles, 1974:188; Gelles, 1987:119; Strube &

Barbour, 1983:786). While the dependency and helplessness of children is fairly obvious, long-term violence between supposedly loving equals is more difficult to explain. Particularly perplexing to sociologists is the 'failure' of adult female victims to leave these relationships. Thus the implicit focus of their research is on the issue of 'exit' from abusive familial situations.

Social-psychological answers similarly emerged with regard to 'entry and exit' in alternative religions. A psychiatrist, noted for opposing alternative religions, asks (probably tongue in cheek) "what kind of nutty people get into these crazy groups?" (John Clark, quoted in Richardson, 1983:5). When former 'cult' members give accounts of abusive practices (after 'exiting'), sociologists label these 'atrocity tales.' Such tales purportedly legitimize the former membership as an experience of oppression of individual will, thus removing the stigma of voluntary deviant membership (Bromley, Shupe, & Ventimiglia, 1983:141; Shupe & Bromley, 1980:154).

The effect of 'psychologizing' in both family and "cult" analysis is the same. The posited 'need' of violence by a battered woman diminishes her status as an actual victim. In the case of former ARO devotees, a 'need' for social acceptance despite deviant status supposedly prompts their 'atrocity tales.' Both suggestions of 'need' are implicitly forms of 'blaming the victim.' Stories of

coercion and abuse are discounted, devaluated by academics as self-serving in (at least sub-conscious) intent. Clark's reference to "nutty people" (typical of much public opinion), also suggests the opinion that personal idiosyncrasies, not social processes, cause people's involvement in alternative religious forms.

Social Structural Explanation

Sociological attention to a "structural theory of violence" for the family affirms the importance of social processes and structure (Gelles, 1974:188). The theory attempts to explain the apparently higher rate of such conflict among lower class families by suggesting lower social power leads to the greater likelihood of violent acts. Subsequent family violence research upholds the importance of social structure but challenges the specifics of Gelles's early theory. The belief that family violence is always directly 'learned' and thus repeated from generation to generation is not supported by evidence (Stacey & Shupe, 1983:43-45). People who batter, or are battered, do not necessarily have a family background of similar experiences that would model or teach such interaction. Another writer states that "significant causal associations have not yet been demonstrated between family violence in the family of origin and subsequent conjugal abuse" (Okun, 1986:63). Research also established that "domestic violence,

particularly woman-battering, is...found throughout all levels" of society (Stacey & Shupe, 1983:38). The visibility of the lower classes in this regard is a result of their limited private resources and concomitant dependence on public agencies for leaving and/or ameliorating the abuse in their relationship (Moore, 1979:16).

These further developments in understanding indicate that family violence is 'built in' to the family, and not learned or passed on to a particular subset of society. Social-structural theorists, therefore, state that family violence is paradoxically rooted in family intimacy (Hotaling & Straus, 1980:10). This argument cites cultural values and modes of organization that ostensibly support 'marital bliss' as key contributors to this dilemma. The uniqueness of these factors requires, they argue, a "special theory of violence" (Hotaling & Straus, 1980:15). Communally based AROs, however, exhibit the same pattern of factors. A 1979 listing of "distinctive" social structural factors developed by Straus and Gelles advocates such a special theory. Eleven factors are listed: 1) Time at risk; 2) Range of activities; 3) Intensity of involvement; 4) Infringing activities; 5) Right to influence; 6) Age and sex discrepancies; 7) Ascribed Roles; 8) Family privacy; 9) Involuntary membership; 10) High levels of stress; and 11) Extensive knowledge of social biographies (listed in Hotaling and Straus, 1980:15-18). In varying degrees, each

social factor for violence is replicated and often exacerbated in AROs. Factors of privacy (no. 8), intense involvement (no. 3), and right to influence (no. 5) are especially relevant to communal alternative religions. These common elements, therefore, support application of the 'special theory' of violence to AROs. The key to that 'special theory' is the mutual intensity of family and communal ARO affiliations. Both groups exhibit the paradoxical conflict that Coser identified for intimate groups: a conflict originating in frequent interaction and total personality involvement (Foss, 1980:116).

1.Time at Risk More time together provides more opportunity for possible conflict. Scholars of family violence do not consider this a primary factor, but they do acknowledge it as a contributing influence. Non-family types of organizational experience, such as work groups, also provide "time at risk" but do not result in the same amount of violence. Other factors add to family violence in concert with the opportunities of much "time at risk."

Communal AROs bring members together for extensive periods of time like most families. Certain forms of group directed activities can increase significantly this time together, beyond what many modern families experience. These include working together in group owned businesses, recruitment of new members, and worship/therapy sessions.

2.Range of Activities and Interests. "Most nonfamily social interactions are focused on a specific purpose or issue; family interactions cover a vast range of activities" (Hotaling and Straus, 1980: 15) Familial conflict is more possible when these various concerns and tasks generate a "dispute or a failure."

Communal AROs replicate this range including such 'familial' concerns as management of intimate relationships, maintaining shelter and sustenance, and the raising of children. AROs involve both these practical and everyday maintenance of life issues as well as institutional goals that invoke strong opinions among those involved.

3.Intensity of Involvement. The socially exclusive nature of families intensifies the sense of injury in instances of disagreement. Family members consider their relationship to be 'special' and experience such disputes with greater emotional intensity than they would with nonfamily. The words and opinions of an intimate have much greater impact on an individual's emotions and self-worth.

Social exclusion also exists in AROs definite communal and faith membership credentials that define the group. The impact of confrontations with fellow members is intensified with these individuals as one's sole reference group. Often such groups place both an emotional value and a religious/institutional goals value on the opinions of fellow members. Thus ARO members experience both a personal

sense of injury as well as guilt or hurt over disagreements on corporate concerns.

4.Infringing Activities . Decisions of an 'either or' nature often leave some members of a family dissatisfied. Hotaling and Straus illustrate this "zero-sum" factor with examples of family decisions over what music to listen to, or what social recreation to pursue. They also note that more basic 'personality' conflicts exist between personal styles and habits, such as neatness vs. sloppiness.

Studies of communally organized living reveal these same familial issues of "personality clashes" and "conflicts of interest" (Scanzoni and Scanzoni, 1981:295). The Scanzonis excerpt an example from these studies that shows the same conflicts over sloppiness and eating habits as Hotaling and Straus use to illustrate family conflicts (Scanzoni and Scanzoni, 1981: 295-296). These 'mundane' issues of interpersonal irritations and conflicts are just as present in AROs. Despite many institutional efforts to reduce and avoid such 'petty divisiveness,' members of AROs fall into these same disputes.

5.Right to Influence. Family members feel it is their right to address the 'failures' of fellow members behaviour. The varieties of activities members are mutually involved in, together with the small 'interpersonal disputes' often are met by 'mutual influence' efforts. Family members will

redress such differences in overt ways that appear less frequently in other organizations.

The right to influence fellow members is also part of life in an alternative religion. More commonplace forms of conflicts are complicated by religious sorts of 'right to influence'. Thus ARO members attempt to influence what they see as fundamental 'spiritual' qualities in each other. An example of 'right to influence' appears in a 19th century commune. Members subjected each other to a semi-formalized procedure of "mutual criticism." "Members who were failing in the spiritual realm, or whose individuality was too pronounced, were requested to undergo criticism, after which they were expected to show some improvement" (Kephart, 1976:70).

6.Age and Sex Discrepancies are also a basic source of conflict. The heterogeneity of members' viewpoints results from the variance in experiences that different generations and both sexes bring to 'family.' Such a heterogeneity contributes to a form of localized "culture conflict" within families (Hotaling and Straus, 1980:16). Parents and children, for instance, experience generational conflict in disputes over the parental right to set 'house rules.' Similarly, marital partners often find themselves in disagreement and tension over authority issues. This particularly occurs when one partner holds to a more traditional ideology of household sex-role authority.

Many communal alternative religions are composed of a particular age-group (usually college-age), but this mixture of 'demographics' still occurs, particularly when children are part of the group. In Hutterite communes "young people are a special problem" as they take liberties with the standards of their faith in sampling forbidden 'outside' pleasures (Kephart, 1976:278). In a Christian commune with traditional sex-roles, a researcher found that the female members "declare their belief in hierarchical relationships, [but] they express some resentment towards them" (Rose, 1987:256). The same familial tensions and conflicts emerge from these age and sex differences and power disparities.

7.Ascribed Roles The sexist organization of the family often places men at the 'head' of the household on the basis of their most basic ascribed status--maleness. Conflict occurs because this placement does not depend on men's individual competence or interest, and relegates women to the role of dependents. The 'biological' orientation of role assignment 'forces' role-holders into positions of power and dependence in the household, and ignores merit and ability.

As exists in many contemporary families, the sexual inequality of various alternative religions also is dramatic. The religious justification of this status difference is a well-known theme and in various AROs "[s]ometimes male dominance in communal living is actually supported by an ideology of male supremacy and female

subordination" (Scanzoni and Scanzoni, 1981:294). For example, the 'Black Hebrew' community of Israel follows a "Divine Order" in which "women are subordinate to men, and both are in turn subordinate to the charismatic leader...This chain of authority is replicated in family organization, with children being subordinate to their parents, and wives being subordinate to their husbands" (Singer, 1982:69).

8. Family Privacy The private nature of family interaction acts to 'protect' it from social intervention when conflict occurs. The acknowledged right of families to unwanted surveillance prevents observation of family disputes. This standard also causes observers to perceive violence as legitimate interaction or as less severe in consequence than similar violence in other social settings. Members of abusive families frequently believe the same thing, minimizing conflict and violence that they experience as 'normal' family arguments and difficulties.

This factor is a crucial one in my comparison to AROs. The same protection from social control is a factor in ARO conflicts. Instead of the claim to 'family privacy,' a standard of 'religious freedom' is invoked by group members. The status of members as supposedly voluntary, adult participants further prevents 'official' mediation in 'cult' violence. Furthermore, ARO members, like family members, believe that their group has a right to an intimate

influence that would often be labelled abusive by outsiders.

"In one rural commune, the charismatic leader motivated a work team of ten hippie men without prior training in construction to build cabins at the astonishing rate of one a day, using poor equipment and often battling terrible weather conditions. The gruelling pace of this work was not resented by the members but rather considered to be a valuable spiritual discipline" (Zablocki, 1980:124). A more severe example comes from Jacobs's study of disaffection from charismatic groups:

> Abusive practices within Eastern-based groups generally took on a different meaning [than in charismatic Christian groups], as physical and psychological punishment were tied to the act of surrender and a test of commitment. In these circumstances, followers would be judged according to their willingness to endure pain and humiliation for the leader. Thus, Divine Light followers spoke of times when the guru would kick a grovelling devotee or force liquids down a person's throat for the purpose of proving that he or she would do anything for the lord (Jacobs, 1989:94).

As is evident in these examples, AROs are like families in members perceiving abuse or violence as a legitimate form of intimate social relationships.

9. Involuntary membership This factor affects both children and adults in families. Children are born into membership, adults often must continue relationships that are for all **practical** purposes, inescapable. The 'involuntariness' of staying comes from emotional, economic, material, and legal constraints on leaving. The marital

relationship is historically a lifetime one, and all relationships begin, at least, with this hope.

ARQs promote the same demand for lifetime commitment, primarily by dire warnings about eternal punishments for exiting the faith. For example, one woman who was attempting to leave a Christian group "was told that Satan would do terrible things to her family, and when she finally made the break, she described herself as suicidal, confused, humiliated, and depressed" (Jacobs, 1989: 97). As well, the constraints of emotional bonds, economic ties and material connections to the group also bind followers. Frequently, leaving means giving up money, friends, spouse and\or child, not to mention eternal hope as constructed by the group's faith. The hold of both worldly and "other-worldly" constraints is powerful.

10. High Levels of Stress The potential for crises, instability, and cycles of change within the nuclear family lead to high levels of stress. Crises in the family often emerge from the inherent instability of small groups, where one individual affects the whole to a much greater degree than in large groups. Thus difficulties or disagreements when changes occur disrupt families that are fundamentally based on dyadic relationships (i.e. the marital relationship). Family members experience stresses from crises all the more because of the "huge emotional investment typical of family relationships" (Hotaling and

Straus, 1980:17). Emotional investments include devotion to the family ideal and to each other, especially between spouses.

In Jacobs' study of religious deconversion, devotees' affective bonds to the religious leader replicates familial 'emotional investment.' She notes the emotional bonding is so great, that like families that have lost a loved one, a process of "mourning" occurred when former devotees gave up their special relationship with the leader (Jacobs, 1987:305). Again, the potential instability of the dyadic follower-leader relationship replicates the familial stress experienced over crises and changes. Jacobs's research reveals that emotional attachment is as significant within alternative religions as in families. The community becomes a "surrogate family unit," with "God-the-father in the form of the charismatic leader" whom followers idealize as "an object of love." The 'love' or emotional bonding that develops is doubled therefore, when both 'real' love and a spiritually 'idealized' love constrain the follower (Jacobs, 1987:304).

The intense pursuit of the 'spiritual' goal, combined with personal and intra-group crises, means various stresses do exist for AROs. The often marginalized and economically precarious nature of AROs provides sufficient stress to validate this factor for the understanding of conflict. Like families, the desire for cohesion among a small number of

individuals, (each of whom are affectively influential) heightens the potential for disruption from crises.

11. Extensive Knowledge of Social Biographies. This knowledge develops within the long-term, intimate, and private nature of family relations. Possession of such knowledge is a source of power for family members in their interactions with each other. An intimate can use weaknesses, past failures, sensitivities, and bad habits in a manner that degrades or controls the 'victim.'

This sort of knowledge also develops within AROs. Day to day interaction reveals the idiosyncrasies and habits of fellow devotees, and combines with such religious themes as honesty, self-abasement, and group management (through religious/therapeutic methods) of personal problems. In certain cases, the combination of these two factors may develop interpersonal knowledge beyond even what many families of origin possess. An example of an initiation procedure from one commune reveals the conscious pursuit of 'extensive social knowledge' for social control of members.

> The next game was called "on the spot." A person was put "on the spot" and other people would direct questions to him or her about anything. Jose was the first person put "on the spot" and people were asking him about everything; about his sex life, about what he didn't like about himself, about the fact that he was overweight, his age, what he wanted most out of life, what was hindering him from doing that, what was wrong with him, what he despises about himself, what he would do to change his life. This went on to a point where it was clearly uncomfortable; there were very complex questions being asked and people were dealing with subconscious motivations.... (Bradley, 1987:110).

This example shows that AROs purposefully apply 'extensive knowledge' to enhance the control over members. Many of their sessions or courses, therefore, involve practices that accelerate this normally long-term familial process.

The overall import of these eleven factors for the structural theory for family violence is one of the "ironic" production of abuse and conflict from processes that are intended to promote opposite experiences (Hotaling and Strauss, 1980:18). In my exploration of these factors I suggest that this same familial "irony" exists in communal AROs. In their intense pursuit of spiritual excellence ARO members establish an ideal of earthly perfection that is unattainable despite all its power of motivation. Nonetheless, AROs quest after these utopian ideals by isolating themselves from the larger society. Like the modern family, they pursue idealized and romanticized relationships in "extreme privacy" and exhibit a high degree of "closure" that protects them from surveillance and accountability (Krain, 1982:72).

Just as I assert that the communal ideal is an unrealistic ideal, Krain states that this structural isolation and intimacy produces a "prison of love" for family members. "A consequence of the prime focus on emotional expressiveness is that emotional demands are placed on family members that cannot be met" (Krain, 1982: 73). The myth of total emotional bonding motivates their

continued participation in the relationship while at the same time producing inevitable failures. Kanter similarly concludes that:

> Far from fostering honesty and openness, then, some communal situations may encourage overt support for myths about group sentiment and suppress any statements or behaviour that might challenge the myths. (The same process occurs, of course, in other primary groups, such as families) (Kanter, 1976:181).

Kanter notes that these myths describe 'positive' states of unity and agreement ("emotional highs") while at the same time describing 'negative' states. Kanter provides an example of such a negative characterization where a former commune member confesses that "[w]e were all very clever at spotting other people's faults and very willing to tell about them" (Kanter, 1976:181).

The social-structural position on family violence posits people as 'victims' of cultural norms and standards. Thus it suggests that family members 'stay' despite abuse because they obey and believe these standards for familial unity. It is likely, in fact, that they pursue those same norms all the more fervently in the face of these disappointments. I may thus characterize the structural view as one that invokes the familial institution's power over the individual in a manner aptly described by Coser's work on 'greedy institutions.'

Greedy Institutions

Coser defines 'greedy institutions' as "organizations and groups ...which make total claims on their members and which attempt to encompass within their circle the whole personality" (Coser, 1974:4). As totalistic institutions they at first appear similar to Goffman's "total institutions" (Goffman, 1961), but Coser is careful to differentiate the two types.[1] In discussing the inmate's experience, Goffman is concerned with institutional "mortification" or attacks on the self. Coser, however, is concerned with greedy institutions' demands on the self, especially ones that require loyalty and commitment from members.

Greedy institutions' make "demands on the person [that] are omnivorous" (Coser, 1974:4). They pressure members to separate from competing roles, status positions, and institutional ties that might compromise members' commitment. In the effort to produce individuals whose

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[1] Goffman's concern is with organizations that employ physical barriers to separate inmates from the outside world. Within their physical domain, such institutions encompass and act to break down barriers separating the three spheres of life: "sleep, play, and work." Goffman terms total institutions "the forcing houses for changing persons; each is a natural experiment on what can be done to the self" (Goffman, 1961:12). Rather than "forcing houses," greedy institutions do not depend on external coercion but "tend to rely on voluntary compliance and to evolve means of activating loyalty and commitment" (Coser, 1974:6). In keeping with their 'voluntary' nature, greedy institutions primarily depend on symbolic boundaries to separate members from the outside world, rather than the physical walls or barriers of the total institution.

loyalties are not compromised by any other institution, greedy institutions remove all possible 'cross-cutting' ties. The severance of external reference sources ensures dependence only on the 'greedy institution' and reduces "cross-pressures" that promote potential loyalty conflict **within** the follower (for a discussion of religious conflict and 'cross pressures' see Coleman, 1956). Coser's attention to symbolic and organizational demands for complete commitment reflects my concern for 'co-opted' members and their endurance of abusive situations.

Demands on the Wife

Coser identifies the male-led family as one greedy institution because it demands and structures an inordinate dependency for women's participation in the institution (Coser, 1974:91). Women's traditional place in the home separates them from any other source of status position. As persons identified by a single role (housewife), they must depend entirely on that role for status and self-worth. Thus they commit themselves totally to that role, and their status becomes completely dependent on that of their husbands. In AROs, members similarly are expected to completely invest themselves in their relationship to their communal religions and leader.

Jacobs notes that ARO devotees were sustained in their faith (their 'status' as faithful followers) by the same sort of patriarchal commitment. In a case study of one young couple, she traces the growing disaffection of that family from their faith. This family's various crises of faith also reveal the manner in which on-going faith is justified. In each crisis the two followers were rejuvenated in their faith by a renewal of their sense of unification and connection with the guru (Jacobs, 1989: 20). Thus, like the traditional housewife, they invested themselves in the status of the familial leader for their own sense of self-worth. Other case studies Jacobs presented also reveal continued loyalty to the charismatic leader as a persistent factor for maintenance of faith. "The willingness and desire to exonerate the leader was perhaps the most consistent theme that appeared throughout the accounts of conversion and disaffection" (Jacobs, 1989:72).

Like the traditional wife, a devoted member becomes subject to what Coser terms the pressures of cognitive dissonance. In both situations, once members commit acts of sacrifice, they are justified as worthwhile, and so separation is less plausible to them. In examining the intense control utopian communities exercise over members' sexual and communal life, Coser notes that "the greater the sacrifice, the greater the pressure to uphold the value of the group in which so much has been invested" (Coser,

1974:147). He repeats that observation in his study of the family, stating that "the more wives sacrifice for the family, the more they are bound to it" (Coser, 1974:91). Marriage and membership in an exclusive religious collectivity entail the process of cognitive dissonance, as each demand escalating emotional investments from the dependent, with corresponding cognitive justification for each act of greater sacrifice.

Jacobs discovered in her study that her respondents "reported similar experiences in which the demands of devotion were to take precedence over all other responsibilities. The pressure to give more time and greater loyalty increased as converts were asked to humble themselves completely" (Jacobs, 1989:50). Coser's process of investment of self accounts for much of the continued dependence on the charismatic leader that Jacobs found in her study. "[T]he process of severing the emotional bond [to the leader] is met with a psychological resistance to separation and rarely is total conversion achieved without external reinforcement...[from individuals] to whom identification can be transferred" (Jacobs, 1989: 102).

Thus Coser, like myself, treats both the family and alternative religions as 'greedy institutions.' Both institutions demand total commitment of members, and structure that commitment through social isolation, mutual criticism and surveillance so that members find their self-

worth in the institution. Coser does not focus (as does Jacobs), however, on the dyadic emotional attachment of member's self to the charismatic leader. Rather, Coser assumes that the communal prevention of dyadic withdrawal through group marriage or celibacy channelled "the emotional energies of their members into the brotherhood" of the community (Coser, 1974:140). His assumption is in keeping with his structural approach, and so he concludes that the utopian community as 'greedy institution' "had succeeded in sucking up the substance of the private self, leaving only a shell" (Coser, 1974: 148).

Jacobs, in contrast, explicitly 'finds' the (more particularly the male) member's self in the emotional attachment to the charismatic leader. Jacobs describes this as a "merging" where ego boundaries between leader and follower are dissolved in a "fusion of self and other" (Jacobs, 1989: 78). Coser states that extreme organizational demands cause the self to disappear into the institution, whereas Kanter believes the same procedures 'mortify' the old self so that a 'new self' emerges "oriented around devotion and a loyalty to the group" (Kanter, 1976:172). Each of these approaches highlight different aspects of the strength of institution over a devotee's self. In keeping with my comparison to abusive families, I prefer to focus on Jacobs's perspective which in its leader-follower focus permits comparison with the dyadic battering relationship.

Thus her attention to 'ego-merging' is congruent with a batterer's extreme possessiveness of his victim (Star, 1982:19).

Another researcher studying the structure of the family notes that "[i]n marriage the woman loses her personhood...The bride who was catered to before marriage, becomes the caterer after marriage.... [and in marriage] she reshapes, adapts, adjusts or represses her personality to keep the marriage intact" (Martin, 1979: 44-45). Similarly, the religious follower is 'wooed' into the faith, and upon joining, experiences a suppression of self for the sake of the charismatic leader's demands. Like wives in traditional marriages, they strive to maintain the religious relationship, and accept punitive demands on their selves for the sake of their identification with the charismatic leader.

Demands on the Servant

Small alternative religions justifiably are comparable to the master-servant relationship. The devoted followers act as servants to the charismatic leader in their performance of various menial tasks necessary for the ongoing material needs of the organization. The servant of Coser's description is severed from outside ties, preferably unmarried, socially isolated (limited to the master's

house), placed in a low-status position, and allowed a warm, but deferential relationship to the master (Coser, 1974:77-78). A description of communes of the Unification church matches this servant characterization.

> [I]n characteristic communal fashion members gave up all but minimal personal possessions upon joining, eschewed individual careers outside the movement, and devoted literally all their time and energies to sustaining the communal group. They observed strict rules of celibacy until personally married by Moon; related to each other as family members (in this fictive kinship system Moon and his wife were designated "True Parents" and UM members as brothers and sisters) ... [and] limited their contacts with outsiders to fairly ritualized situations such as fund-raising and proselytization.... (Shupe and Bromley, 1980:35).

To serve their community and master, then, religious devotees follow the same practices as oppressed servants involving separation from external social ties. The community permits them only ritualized contact with the outside world, much as the servant primarily was limited to dealings with institutions that related to service of the household.

The religious follower is in a low-status position and thus seeks status in relationship to the charismatic leader. That symbolic connection acts to ensure followers' loyalty to protect their leader. Much like the wife in the traditional family, servants "tended consciously and unconsciously to identify with their masters and took them as models to be imitated" because of "the structural constraints under which they operated (Coser, 1974:78).

Again, Jacobs's discussion of ego-merging reveals the same process. One of her subjects spoke of his desire to model and imitate the charismatic leader: "'I stayed because I thought if I tried, if I did all of the practice and all of the discipline, I would become like him'" (quoted in Jacobs, 1989:77).

The example of 'Moonies' allowing their leader to select marriage partners fits the servant model that Coser identifies. Members' loyalty and commitment first is directed toward Moon and the Unification church by group imposed demands of celibacy, later followed by marriage to a fellow devotee. Coser notes a similar practice for servants that promoted either celibacy or marriage to a fellow employee to ensure household loyalty. "The ideal servant is unmarried, even asexual. Alternatively, if there are married servants, it is highly preferable that both be members of the master's household and subject to his control" (Coser, 1974:77). Here Coser correctly identifies the control of dyadic relationships as motivated by the need to maintain strong affectual ties and loyalty to the master/charismatic leader.

Coser notes that the quasi-familial nature of the master-servant relationship held the possibility of producing opposite consequences. If the master's status declined, "the servant might well be tempted to betray the master who was no longer quite as masterful" and as a

consequence "constraint in the presence of servants seems to have been fairly frequent" (Coser, 1974:79). The close proximity of certain followers to their charismatic leaders also generates this same possibility. In these situations, "the difficulty of maintaining the ideal is often greater as the more privileged disciples have the opportunity to witness the leader under stress or in moments of vulnerability" (Jacobs, 1989:90).

Although somewhat tangential to my 'familial abuse' analogy, the servant characterisation for religious membership nonetheless highlights a familial relationship involving the structural disempowerment of followers. Coser states that the "traditional master-servant relationship exhibits in almost pure form the characteristics of asymmetry [of power].... the master is able to get something for nothing--or at least for very little" (Coser, 1974:80). Like the ancient feudal system, servanthood designs complete subservience and dependence into a relationship. "Individuals who would not tolerate a feudal society still insist upon an owner/dependent type of family structure" (Martin, 1979:45). The most obvious example of feudal deference today exists in implicit norms of patriarchal families which assert that 'dependents' are 'subservient' to paternal authority. I contend that an analogous type of servant deference also exists in intense relationships of a religious nature.

Conclusion

A religious follower will 'stay' in an abusive group because of the continued allegiance structured by a dependent servant status. Coser's discussion, therefore, of 'servant' and 'traditional wife' roles contributes insights into disempowerment processes that occur in both abusive families and abusive AROs. Generally, the structural theory of family violence obscures that 'power' component in its concern with the privacy and intensity of familial relations. Coser's material, however, on 'greedy institutions,' establishes that conflict and abuse in the familial relations of AROs are predictable products of those same structural factors. The intimacy and privacy of familial situations fosters if not permits abuse among persons of structurally unequal positions of power.

The 'complete picture' provided by structural theory to 'staying' in AROs, therefore, involves both irony and disempowerment. Members of AROs pursue a religious ideal of spiritual perfection that, like family life, is a romanticized version of the actual communal experience. Thus they frequently endure the failures and abuses of communal relationships by justifying them as necessary processes in the pursuit of the ideal. From the structural viewpoint, the 'irony' of AROs is that the very idealization of a perfect community provides the social conditions for disempowerment of followers.

Chapter III Systems Explanation

Overview

The Systems approach to explaining 'why abused family members stay' stresses that people in an abusive situation isolate themselves through formation of a 'symbiotic' relationship within the group context. Such individuals establish boundaries that prevent 'novel inputs' from upsetting this relationship, and thereby are able to maintain an abusive pattern. These boundaries provide a private 'reality' to such individuals, supporting their sense of 'us against the world' (Shupe, Stacey, & Hazlewood, 1987:60).

In this chapter, therefore, I will expand on the manner in which members of alternative religions also are able to generate such a separate world for themselves. For them their world becomes an enclave from the 'evil' outside. When leaders apply coercive forms of control, members are kept from departing by the totality of their relation to both the leader and group.

In the familial systems answer to 'why do abuse victims stay,' members' participation in the total 'reality' of their ARO experience limits the external systems influence. As a result, these members regard life in the 'cult' as their only viable source of spiritual, material, and affective support.

Abusive Family Systems

The systems approach espouses the view that family violence is a product of a complex interplay of factors. A dependence, therefore, on a 'single-cause' theoretical approach is conceptually inadequate, for in reality, social phenomena do not result from linear-causal relationships. The authors of a recent sociological treatment of family violence declare in this spirit that: "[w]e must abandon single-cause explanations such as sexism, psychological insecurity, media influence, and economic strains and yet simultaneously embrace them all" (Shupe, Stacey, & Hazlewood, 1987:19).

These three authors support a systems perspective because of their own growing realization that wife-battering is not the only form of family violence among adults. Women do not cause as much physical 'damage' but can, and often do, act violently, and thus 'contribute' to familial violence (Steinmetz, 1977:69). Furthermore, many women return (often several times) to the abusive relationship despite opportunities to remain out (Okun, 1986:56). Systems analysis reveals that members of abusive relationships form alliances in relationships, each reciprocally contributing to the conflict (Shupe, Stacey & Hazlewood, 1987:60).

In such a mutually dependent 'system,' these members "form a bond or symbiosis so it's 'us against the world'" (Shupe, Stacey & Hazlewood, 1987:60). In this vein, Krain's

comment on the "closure" of contemporary family structure is important because he notes that the radically private nature of family life prevents surveillance and accountability by external influence. Thus "[w]hatever order or disorder exists in any given family is almost exclusively a product of its internal processes...and unacceptable forms and levels of violence can occur unchecked" (Krain, 1982:72-73). In systems terms, the family system is "closed," as evidenced by its strong resistance to influence by the larger system (i.e. society). Individual 'given families' that evolve violent patterns of behaviour frequently exhibit such 'closure' in an extreme form by their rejection of external social control.

As well, a violent family system discourages influence, or 'novel inputs' from within that would upset the symbiosis (Giles-Sims, 1983:10). Family members participate in that maintenance of interaction patterns in their loyalty to 'what they know.' "Even in nonschizophrenic families certain types of interactions may come to be valued by its members that would be considered abusive in others" (Steffen, 1982: 57). Another writer reviews the 'internal' system compensations that alcoholic families employ to maintain their own brand of symbiosis. "[C]linicians have reported...that in some families the well-being of other family members seems to be dependent upon the alcoholic member's continued drinking...[and] that spouses

often sought to sabotage treatment" (Flanzer, 1982:43). In this example family members reject both external influences for change (the interventions of therapists) and internal disruptions (the alcoholics' changed behaviour).

Walker advocates a psychotherapy approach for abusive relationships that teaches members of such families to be independent individuals.

> The critical element here is to break that symbiotic bond. What we are dealing with are not two independent human beings. We are dealing with a relationship in which the two people believe that they can only survive if they are together. What we have to do in psychotherapy is teach each one of them to be independent people, then they may be able to make an interdependent relationship. Until each one of them feels whole and able to stand on his or her own, they will not be able to do it (Walker, 1979:77).

Writers who employ systems analysis also describe the symbiotic bond as a 'coalition' that involves problematic rigidity and imbalances in a family system. "A coalition in this sense **is a situation in which two or more family members have a special bond or alliance that excludes or is different from other relationships within the family network** [emphasis in original] (Flanzer, 1982:44). Key to this definition is the exclusionary nature of the coalition.

From the systems's perspective, then, the rigidity of that bond--i.e. its resistance to change--produces the 'dysfunctional' maintenance of abusive behaviour. Members of the coalition 'exclude' other individuals who would disrupt their established modes of interaction. Those modes of

interaction, in fact, discourage others from becoming involved. Friends and neighbours often are repulsed by a relationship that they are unable or reluctant to understand. "Neighbours usually do nothing about the assaults they hear or see, and such assaults may embarrass them...[so they contrive] not to know what is going on" (Dobash and Dobash, 1979:176).

The maintenance of 'dysfunctional' or abusive patterns of behaviour in the family also occurs through 'scapegoating.' The scapegoat "serves a protected function for the family by providing a diversion, as well as helping insure greater unity through the family's shared projection defense system; the scapegoat cements the family bonds" (Flanzer, 1982:45). The attention given to the 'scapegoat' allows a family to ignore its 'corporate' responsibility for abuse and conflict. Thus the attention given the scapegoated member by the family implicitly maintains rather than disrupts the problematic patterns of relating. Further, as Flanzer notes, family members draw even closer together by uniting against the offending 'scapegoat.'

The notion of a 'closed system' particularly is relevant to understanding alternative religions. In such groups, doctrines and structures typically exclude allegedly harmful or "sinful" societal influence. Researchers, for example, frequently discuss the repugnance of communal AROs to the sinful world 'outside.' "Oneida scorned the outside

world as filthy and contaminating ... [a]fter visitors had left, the community gathered for a ritual cleaning 'bee,' to efface every trace of an 'unclean public' and of the 'filthy invaders'" (Kanter, 1974:549). The Black Hebrews of Israel also employ pejorative labels that symbolically describe their rejection of outsiders. "Nonmembers are referred to as either "gentiles," "strangers," or occasionally "heathens." Their native United States is referred to not as "America" but as "Babylon" or "the other side." Those who leave the group are called "devils," a term related to their belief that the Devil wields great power over the world (Singer, 1982:69). In another example, the very secretive Children of God became a "heroic pariah community" under David Berg's guidance, going underground to escape what he believed was a growing religious persecution (Beckford, 1985:37). Like the Black Hebrews, David Berg declared that the author of that alleged persecution was the Devil. These examples portray an "us against the world" mentality analogous to the viewpoint of individuals in abusive families.

These exclusive organizations incorporate implicit and explicit forms of familial bonds to develop a form of "symbiotic union." Thus the previously mentioned "ego-merging" of leader and follower (Jacobs, 1989) also occurs in the larger community. Part of members' "communion" or ego-merging is the "powerful cohesion that fuses individual members in [an experience]...of brotherhood and love"

(Bradley, 1987:111). "The Black Hebrews have developed a number of mechanisms for spreading affective ties throughout the community while limiting the strength of any particular set of ties" (Singer, 1982:76). The well-known practice of complex marriage in certain communes replicates that practice of diffuse affective ties. In the Oneida community for example, "[m]onogamous marriage was harmful because it excluded others from sharing in connubial affection" (Kephart, 1976:79).

The role of leaders in establishing standards and rules is important to maintaining the 'symbiotic union' of a closed system. In the family, "[i]f one member of the system is more powerful, [then] his/her own personal goals prevail over the goals of the total system" (Giles-Sims, 1983:15). For alternative religions, the importance of powerful leaders lies in their capacity to maintain a socially unique direction for the groups' goals. The uniqueness is necessary to inhibit members' pursuit of that goal outside their groups' influence. Again, Kanter's research into communal living discovered 'successful' utopias often were directed by one individual with "ultimate guiding power" (Kanter, 1972:118). The parental authority of these single leaders contributed to group solidarity in rallying followers to their common status as "brothers and sisters" (Kanter,1972:132).

The power and direction of leaders would appear to contradict my discussion of the power of 'brotherhood' and cohesion. But as Coser notes:

> The paradox, however, is only apparent. Common subjection to authority favours levelling and, as Simmel has said, "insofar as a number of people are equally subject to one individual, they are themselves equal." This kind of negative democratization or equalization of the members of the sect does not contradict but rather complements their subjection to authoritarian control (Coser, 1974:112-113).

Under the direction of their leader, then, alternative religions develop a 'new' way of life that challenges the conventions of contemporary society. Strict 'system boundaries' develop through the use of a unique religious vocabulary, codes of behaviour, clothing, ritual activities, and exclusive residences. These boundaries prevent the influence of societal counterparts and help to stabilize the patterns of interaction within the group.

I noted previously that the marital 'coalition' repulses outsiders. The same exclusion occurs for radical AROs. Coser describes this well: "[t]he initial radicalism led to rejection by the outside, but this rejection in turn led to an accentuation of sect characteristics which made a return to the world impossible" (Coser, 1974:115). He also notes the same process of inverted attention to maintaining unity for 'sects' that operates in a symbiotic familial relationship. "[T]he maintenance of the organization as such superseded the ostensible purposes for which it had come

into being" (Coser, 1974:115). This world-rejection and consequent inward turning propensity of sects and communal AROs also results in 'interior' paranoia. Like 'dysfunctional' families, a sect seeks out "scapegoats, [who] through their sacrifice, cleanse the group of its failings, and in this way reestablish its solidarity; the loyal members are reassured that the group as whole has not failed ..." (Coser, 1974:110). The scapegoat serves the same function for both 'familial' organizations in avoiding admission of weakness and unifying the group against the offender. Although the scapegoat concept is not unique to these examples, both institutions exhibit 'familial' intensity that warrant the analogy.

The negative feedback of group and leader sanctions deter any 'novel' responses that may upset established patterns. Describing a system as 'closed,' therefore, is an alternative way of saying that it is socially isolated and private. As Kanter noted, the study of commitment mechanisms in communes illustrates that members "have a clear sense of their own boundaries" and develop a "strong distinction between the inside and the outside" (Kanter, 1972:52).

The system notions of established interaction, symbiotic union, and closed boundaries hold particular relevance to abusive practices in AROs. These notions once more highlight the social-structural attention to familial factors of isolation, privacy and resulting freedom from outside social

control. The development of unique patterns of interaction within the group is then attributable to the strength of **internal** social control mechanisms. Like the families that exhibit patterns of interaction many would call abusive, ARO members believe that they participate in behaviours justified as component parts of their own legitimate 'world.'

A relatively mild example of this 'reverse labelling' comes from an expressly patriarchal community with a complex theology that delegated women to an inferior role. The theology employed female terminology to describe sinfulness, placed men in authority over women, and permitted an "essential tension" between the two sexes. Some members, on the basis of that theology, "even referred to the women of the commune collectively as 'the whores' and 'the bitches' (Wagner, 1982:235). The collusion and agreement of female members with such a theology reveals the strength of the internalized control of such a 'system interaction.' A more moderate example comes from the Oneida community. Many people might regard the Oneida practice of 'mutual criticism' with much aversion. Members of the community, however, apparently viewed the experience as "an expression aimed at maximizing interactive cohesion," and a member attested that "I feel as though I had been washed; [I] felt clean through the advice and criticism given" (quoted in Kephart: 1976:70-71).

One of the most extreme examples of internally justified group actions is of 'flirty-fishing' in the Children of God. Members of 'COG' (particularly women) practiced the biblical command to be "fishers of men" through sexual enticement, as commanded by David Berg, the group's leader. Thus members of COG who performed this 'religious prostitution' accepted Berg's doctrinal justifications of the religious demand for such a practice of "divine love." 'Flirty-fishing,' like other 'abusive' forms of interaction, also served partly as a method of affirming loyalty and unity. Beckford quotes Berg as stating: "'[t]hat revelation about **Flirty Fishing was the ultimate test** that really divided the sheep from the goats, both wives and husbands'" (Berg, quoted in Beckford, 1985:38).

Thus these internal control mechanisms are a strong interactional currency for fellow devotees who 'hold these up' to each other in a conjoint affirmation of limiting standards. Familial systems theory permits the addition of a 'follower system,' suggesting the role of ARO members as a conceptually separate 'dependency group.' In other words, followers indirectly maintain charismatic leaders' authority through reiterating to each other beliefs in their own inadequacy or 'sinfulness.'[2]

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[2] These 'follower-follower' interactions are crucial aspects that Weber's charismatic relationship does not delineate, as

In this system's formulation of internal patterns of interaction, abuse and conflict are conceptualized, ironically, as forces for cohesion. An anthropological study of a rural Spanish community notes this same paradox.

> An emotional ambivalence is everywhere, in every act, overture, and thought; and people are joined as well as set apart by their antagonisms. In fact, their mutual hostility is what seems to unite them, combatively, into a community of mutual involvement. And from the resulting chaos of negative emotions ... there emerges--somehow--an inscrutable centripetal force that binds these feuding friends into a unit.... (Gilmore, 1987:9).

Gilmore suggests that the reason for the paradox of 'aggression and community' is the "normative structure" of public opinion. The cumulated aggression of individuals enforce that structure in a form of "moral policing" (Gilmore, 1987:28).

Thus the answer to cohesion and 'staying' in abusive AROs once again involves a paradox. The structural 'reading' describes familial violence as the paradoxical or 'ironic' product of norms for intimate relations. The systems analysis, again, declares that abusive interaction is a

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he only argues that charisma rests on a 'follower-leader' relationship. Simply put, a prophet whose message is not accepted and believed by a committed fellowship is nothing more than another eccentric. The prophet's special 'charismatic' status is dependent, then, on a following of believers who recognize that charisma. (Weber, 1968:52).

Systems theory, however, suggests that the 'follower-follower' system also supports a charismatic leader as established interactions between members affirm their common subservience to the leader. These interactions act as a mutual support system that upholds followers' allegiance during moments of doubt or when the leader is absent.

paradoxical source of cohesion. Rather than 'norms,' however, I stress members' roles in maintaining a 'world' that justifies and maintains their abusive interactions. Thus ARO members 'stay' because of their mutual loyalty to fellow members and their mutual fear and distrust of the world outside. They continue to engage, therefore, in violent and exploitive activities of their selves that ironically sustain their 'symbiosis' and thus 'close' them to the rest of the world.

Chapter IV Feminist Explanation

Overview

Advocates of feminist analysis clearly identify the patriarchal organization of the family as the primary reason 'why members stay.' Feminists assert that the household's male leader, as undisputed controller in the home, is the one who prevents female members escaping the violence that he generates. Society supports patriarchal domination of the home, as ineffective courts, police, and societal supports together also prevent the escape of many women from their abusive home-lives.

I will draw upon Walker's (1989) description of the batterer's random unpredictability for comparison to 'staying' in alternative religions. Together with the social difficulties of separation, this unpredictable behaviour renders female family violence victims effectively helpless to leave. Batterers' unpredictability is reflected in the leadership styles of ARO charismatic leaders. Although members of AROs usually are not subjected to the same intense individual attention as are family violence victims, they too are dependent on their god-like leaders' ever-changing edicts and assertions.

The Feminist Argument

The feminist perspective on family violence is concerned with the social control that men exert over women. As one author summarizes, "[f]eminists advocate asking why conjugal violence tends to victimize women so much more than it does men, rather than inquiring why the family is such a violent institution" (Okun, 1986:108). Answering this question, feminist theory identifies women's victimization in the home as ultimately the result of the sexist and violent organization of society. "[I]mplications and statements of male superiority breed inequality in male/female relationships. They encourage men's control over women and the abuse of power. In the end, they lead to violence" (Walker, 1989:3).

Walker's model of "learned helplessness" accounts for why a woman does not leave a battering relationship. She argues that such a woman is engaging in "coping responses" to extreme stress, and, by remaining, is dealing with the "demons" that they know well. The degree of control held by the man and the degree of dependency of the woman conspire to render 'leaving' even more problematic than 'staying.' Existence outside of the relationship includes the factor of the unknown in addition to the man's continued interventions.

Walker draws her concept of "learned helplessness" from the research of psychologist Martin Seligman into

intermittent reinforcement. Psychologists subjected laboratory dogs that were confined in cages to a random and variable schedule of electric shocks. The dogs, unable to escape, and unable to 'predict' the shocks occurrence, responded passively so that they would not attempt escape even if the cage doors were opened. The researchers discovered, however, that the dogs were engaging in "coping responses" that minimized the electrical shocks. The dogs would lay on a less conductive segment of the electrical grid and in their own excrement (as an insulator), to reduce the shock to their bodies. Thus the dogs' "learned helplessness" favoured the use of such coping responses that offered 'predictable' results. Walker notes that "learned helplessness" for people is a cognitive process, where "the truth or facts of a situation turn out to be less important than the individual's set of beliefs or perceptions concerning the situation" (Walker, 1989:50).

The "helplessness" that Walker describes results from a woman's learned inability to "predict the effect her behaviour will have" on her situation (Walker, 1989:50). That inability emerges from experiencing long-term, chaotically patterned, abuse practices by the batterer. Battered women, therefore, learn from this abusive 'intermittent reinforcement' that they are unable to control their experiences. Furthermore, abused women learn that the 'coping' strategy of apparent passivity is the best means

for minimizing their abuse. Some even cope by provoking a battering incident, as they experience greater anguish in anticipating and waiting for the next episode of violence. "[Women] provoked the event so that they could eke out some control as to the time and place. To live under the terrible pressure of knowing that one will be beaten, but not knowing when or how, is almost unimaginable and unbearable" (Conroy, 1982:31).

Thus in a battering relationship, "the batterer's chief power is his seemingly random and variable unpredictability" (Walker, 1989:47). Batterers exhibit a characteristic "good/bad" or "Jekyll/Hyde" dynamic of constant personality change that follows the popular image of "schizophrenia." Other (non-feminist) researchers characterize batterers in a strikingly similar fashion. "The women also agreed about the men's poor impulse control....[T]he men became upset over small things and had radical mood changes (a sort of Jekyll and Hyde effect associated with a low tolerance for frustration) when they lost their tempers" (Shupe, Stacey, Hazlewood, 1987:42). A woman who experienced long-term abuse alludes to this unpredictability in describing her husband's behaviour "'I have been threatened when he's had a bad day and when he's had a good day.... No one has to provoke a wife-beater. He will strike out when he's ready and for whatever reason he has at the moment'" (quoted in Martin, 1979:34-35).

Besides the cognitive aspect of helpless anticipation, there also is an emotional confusion for the victim of an unpredictable batterer. Two sociologists note that batterer's prompt this emotional confusion through playing out "'Jekyll-and-Hyde' performances after abusing women ..." and they provide an account by one woman of such behaviour:

> He became very emotional when it was all over. I mean he came unglued. He sobbed and cried and begged me to forgive him, to take him back. It was pathetic, it was so heart- rending. At times like that he actually made me feel guilty and I felt better after I forgave him. Then the same day, maybe only hours later, he'd stop being grateful or apologetic. His other routine would start. He'd get cool about it all. He'd tell me that women's place was to get beat up in fights...He'd start thinking up things I had done to anger him. We were back to square one (quoted in Stacey and Shupe, 1983:98).

These emotionally confusing behaviourial "turnarounds" can occur over a matter of hours, as evident in this example, or over a much longer period of time, with reconciliation building once more to a climax of abuse. 'Turnarounds,' however, also could occur "in incredibly brief periods of time" which Stacey and Shupe illustrate with the example of a woman's telephone conversation with her abusive husband:

> He wanted me to give him the shelter's address so he could come and talk to me. I said I wouldn't so he called me some names and said he would kill me. Then he asked about the kids. Finally he asked if we could still be friends and go out dancing this weekend. He's horny. God! I couldn't believe it! (quoted in Stacey and Shupe, 1983:98-99).

The founder of the women's shelter movement in Britain aptly describes the resulting emotional turmoil for victims of this good/bad confusion. Although her description involves

parent-child interaction, it nonetheless reveals the same ambivalence that marital dependents (women) experience. Since the feminist perspective stresses that women are infantalized by their subservient and dependent role in the marital relationship, comparison of children to women is apt. "When the parent is good the child feels guilty for the hatred it feels during the periods when the parent is bad...[w]hen the parent is bad the child becomes full of hatred and contempt for the parent and for himself for being fooled yet again ..." (Pizzey, 1974:69).

Women are confronted, therefore, by a capricious individual who at one moment behaves in a loving and caring fashion but in the next is violent and abusive. Thus women are 'helpless' before this apparently 'irrational' behaviour, unable to effectively respond and exact personal control over their lives. Although they may fundamentally desire freedom from the abuse, that same abuse constrains them. When a battered woman was asked "Why do you think you stayed with him as long as you did?" she responded with: "'Fear, I think. Fear of going, fear of staying'" (quoted in Dobash and Dobash, 1979:147).

The unpredictability of a 'controller' has a direct counterpart in studies of charismatic leadership. Groups that are charismatically led exhibit "histories [that] are curiously volatile and erratic in terms of the diversity of their innovations and the abruptness and unpredictability

with which these innovations are introduced" (Wallis, 1983:4). This "constant ambiguity and contradiction" relates to the a charismatic leader's need to maintain exclusive control (Wallis, 1982:106).

The charismatic leader acts unpredictably to oppose any routinization of his/her authority. Thus a charismatic leader is 'irrational' in seemingly acting without 'common sense.' More importantly, the leader opposes the 'rationalization' (routinization) of his/her leadership role that would permit 'bureaucratic' leadership (Weber, 1968:61). The maintenance of a constantly changing, capricious leadership affirms the constant primacy of the leader's final word. Nothing becomes 'certain' except for the leader's latest edict. In this manner, followers of capricious charismatic leaders experience the same cognitive uncertainty experienced by abused family members. Thus followers "are rendered exclusively dependent upon the leader who remains the sole source of certainty" (Wallis, 1983:10). The dependence of a charismatic's followers is the mirror image of the battered woman's "helplessness" in the face of unpredictability. The cognitive effect of capricious leadership also contributes to followers 'staying.' "Perpetual flux renewed members' fervour and commitment" (Wallis, 1988:119).

Battering men generate an aura of "omniscience/ omnipotence" by their constant but chaotically administered

abuse. Fear of the ever-present possibility of the batterer's abuse hold's women captive to a waiting expectation. Pizzey (although probably unaware of Walker's concept) reveals battered women's "learned helplessness" in the example of one woman's 'coping strategy' for such fear.

> [The battered woman] explained that it was better to be at home where she knew where he was than sitting night after night not knowing if the footstep passing her door was him, or the car idling on the street was him waiting to catch her. Very few people understand this kind of fear. It is the fear of knowing that someone is searching for you and will beat you when he finds you. In the mind of someone who has been badly beaten, this fear blots out all reason. The man seems to be **omnipotent....** (Pizzey, 1974:39 [my emphasis]).

Some batterers apparently revel in their own sense of power, as Terry Davidson notes of her own father, an abusive man who held great social power as a cleric.

> Running a church, making executive decisions, with people looking up to you and coming to you for counsel, presiding at the ceremonies of life and death--a job like this would provide a suitable power trip. I suspect his success at getting away with his crimes [of family abuse] inflated his sense of **omnipotence** and guiltlessness to the point where he may have become psychotic (Davidson, 1978:133 [my emphasis]).

Thus the long-term subjection to men's coercion eventually causes women to believe that there is no limit to batterers' control.

Besides batterers' apparent unlimited abilities, those in the community whose interests are risked by the fall of socially powerful batterers sometimes aid them by the 'hushing up' of women's atrocity tales (Walker, 1989:107).

Even the 'objective' legal system leaves many battered women vulnerable to continued assault, despite attempts to legally sanction batterers (Davidson, 1978:88; Dobash and Dobash, 1979:222; Walker, 1989:236). With the 'world against them,' women in extremely abusive relationships often attest to a fear of the husband's influence "beyond the grave" (Walker, 1989:64).

Women's belief in their batterers' omniscience finds obvious comparison in the alleged spiritual authority and power of religious leaders. In particular, the charismatic 'mandate' or 'gift,' supported by requisite 'miracles,' exemplifies the unusual abilities of leaders for their followers (Weber, 1978:1114).[3] Furthermore, charismatic

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[3] Weber's concept of "charisma" contributes to the understanding of a leader's 'familial' control in religions. Again, charisma is a factor in religious organization that does not refer to leadership qualities, but instead to a social relationship between leader and followers (Wilson, 1975:7). A charismatic leader is merely a "prophet without honour" unless s/he establishes a following who believes in that 'prophecy.'

Such a relationship is most likely in societies where there is "personal trust" between actors. The formerly 'simpler' societies where persons related to each other as "total beings" (rather than role-performers) permitted that kind of trust (Wilson, 1975:25). In modern society, this sort of holistic relationship is still found in family and family-like arrangements (such as communal AROs). Weber's description of the administrative inner circle of the charismatic leader as "an emotional form of communal relationship" supports this contention (Weber, 1947:360).

Weber pointed out that followers expect charismatic leaders to prove their authority through continual miracles. I suggest that, for many groups, modern miracles consist of the products of personal and interpersonal triumphs within the communal context. As one author notes, modern rationality largely precludes more spectacular attestations of power

figures establish a repertoire of 'heroic' abilities that sets them above admiring followers (Stone, 1982:154). The charismatic leader usually 'reveals' these qualities within the context of the communal following (as only those with faith will see correctly).

Jacobs notes that follower's attribute to the leader "a quality of omnipotence through which he is perceived to know all thoughts and actions of his followers." Like the battered woman who is fearful of the man's seeming omnipotence/omniscience, followers in Jacobs's study experience a sense of vulnerability before the leader's perceived powers. The statement of a former follower attests to the same variability of good/bad in relation to the leader about which battered women also speak. "'It could just be great, but on the other hand it could also be excruciating ... he just lays you bare...[and he] knows who you are and so in that respect it could be pretty scary'" (quoted in Jacobs, 1989:76). Another respondent attests to the good/bad nature of a religious leader's control with the same swift 'turnaround' of behaviour:

(Wilson, 1975:112). Kanter's statement concurs with my contention: "the overwhelming emphasis in the contemporary movement was a concern with individual fulfilment and relations in a small group" (Kanter, 1976:159).

Again, intimate relations emerge as a crucial element for social control. Charismatic leaders' depend on familial control in producing legitimizing proofs of authority for their 'gathered saints.' Such intimate control establishes a receptive, affirming, and deferential audience for leaders' successful performance of these proofs.

> ...I was feeling almost suicidal and I talked to a leader and I broke down and cried. And I told him I had a couple of rock and roll tapes in the dorm. He physically dragged me down into the dorm and he made me get them out and he started screaming at me about how evil they were and about bringing evil into the church and he threw them down and started stamping on them. And he ordered me to go and throw them out so I did and I was scared to death. I didn't want to go back inside because I thought he was going to beat me. But I threw them out and when I came back inside, it was like **Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde**. He comes over to me and he is very big and he says stand up and I thought, this is it...and he hugs me. I couldn't believe it.
>
> I couldn't take a person like that. I felt loved by him because he was concerned about me. But the thing was he was concerned about his church. One of the powerful attractions is the idea of being loved (quoted in Jacobs, 1989:93 [my emphasis]).

This example reveals the emotional confusion for an individual who is subjected to sudden changes of behaviour by a controller. Much of that power of control is rooted in proffering love along with punishment.

I previously noted that victims of family abuse experience an emotional confusion of guilt and anger as the batterer alternates between 'Jekyll and Hyde.' Jacobs's respondents also experienced a sense of guilt for leaving the charismatic leader. Jacobs, like myself, compares their remorse to the guilt felt by children of abusive parents. She notes that, because of the abuse they experienced, ex-devotees expressed both anger and guilt in relation to the charismatic figure (Jacobs, 1989: 115-119). Like family victims, they felt guilt for betraying their relationship, and fear of possible 'spiritual' retribution for leaving (like the fear of a batterer's punishment). Later, they

developed a sense of anger for their subjection to abuse (their own betrayal). As well, the notion of the charismatic leader's power, like the batterer's, "coming from beyond the grave" is found in fears of eternal retribution (in which the leader's power would reach beyond bodily death). As a former follower to an extremist Christian minister states: "'[i]t is possible that there is a Jehovah and that there is a hell and if the pastor is right then I don't have a chance in the world" (quoted in Jacobs, 1989:116). Jacobs's discussion of these themes addresses the leaving process, but it also provides potential directions for research into the dynamics of 'staying' through the inculcation of 'fear' and 'guilt.'

Finally, like the socially influential batterer, interested parties (i.e., committed members) protect religious leaders when 'atrocity tales' potentially threaten their public status. A former Krishna Consciousness member provides such an account. The president of the powerful New York temple was employing organizational money for his own purposes and breaking his vow of celibacy. "'A few people did know what he was doing--seeing women and investing money privately--but he had his goon squads and he would have these people beaten up and thrown out of the temple if they talked about his activities'" (quoted in Jacobs, 1989:59).

Crucial to feminist explanations is the amount of control exercised by men over women. This extensive control

is based in physical, psychological, emotional, and economic forms of abuse, manipulation, and choice-limitation. Such factors find direct comparison in alternative religions as a form of 'coercive control.' Like Walker, Lewis Okun terms the "brainwashing" manipulation in female abuse a type of 'coercive control.' He notes that comparison to the earlier studies of thought reform is justified by the replication of verbal abuse, physical beatings, and confinement in the family (Okun, 1986:115-116). Feminism's 'controller-dependent' power dynamic for coercive control is retained if we replace 'men' with religious leaders and 'women' with religious followers.

Conclusion

The perspective of feminist 'control' deals in issues of random and unpredictable leader control to explain maintenance of faith in alternative religious organizations. This approach directly attributes abuse and 'staying' to the charismatic leaders' power of wilful management. As Weber notes, "[c]harismatic domination means a rejection of all ties to any external order ... it makes a sovereign break with all tradition or rational norms: 'It is written, but I say unto you'" (Weber, 1968:24).

This power for change enables the charismatic leader to produce ever-new mandates, rules, and directions for followers. Justifications to followers are not negated, but

charismatic authority releases them from 'everyday' standards of validity and rest primarily on 'prophetic revelation.' Thus the constant changes actually provide a sense of challenge and renewed commitment to followers as divine authority redirects the passion of a charismatically based faith.

The specific feminist notion of "learned helplessness" expands Weber's concept to include descriptions of abusive charismatic domination. Charismatic leaders deal with followers in a manner that vacillates between love and abuse. This interpersonal unpredictability reinforces the power of the leader to control the follower. The follower remains committed to the religious relationship by these individual experiences. First, the leader's random behaviour disrupts the follower cognitively through an apparent ability to always gain the upper hand. Simply put, the leader always 'makes the rules' and ever is able to change those rules to suit the moment. Within the religious context, the leader is justified in every whim of prophetic command, and so the follower remains subject to those new whims. Secondly, charismatic leaders emotionally confuse followers in subjecting them to erratic patterns of affective support (love) and punishment. Followers experience a 'roller-coaster' of conflicting emotions in response to this treatment, alternating between guilt and

fear. Within the familial context of the ARO, both these emotions serve as further supports for 'staying.'

As in the systems and structural versions of familial abuse, the answer to 'why do members stay' once again involves 'paradox.' The paradox of the feminist position is simply that the leader's exhibition of contradictory and confusing behaviour ironically supports continued membership of ARO members. Within the religious and interpersonal enterprise of communal faith, such unpredictability actually 'fits' the charismatic mandate for leadership. Members are renewed by ever-new revelations from God that challenge and revitalize their faith in offering new goals and insights. At the interpersonal level, members experience both cognitive and emotional disruption in relation to their leader. The paradox, again, is that this random treatment furthers leaders' power in implicitly supporting the belief in their prophetic omnipotence/omniscience.

Chapter V Charismatic Control

Overview

The fifth chapter of my thesis addresses the charismatic leader's power of control over constraining members to 'stay.' This chapter employs the process of progressive risk that operates within the marital dyad, where abused individuals receive increasingly greater abuse. The abuse escalates along with a corresponding greater emotional commitment of members. I will address this same process in alternative religions, in particular drawing upon Janet Jacobs's (1989) work on affective bonding to charismatic leaders. The popular image of brainwashing suggests that leaders of alternative religions exert restrictive controls against new initiates. In the charismatic relationship, however, members establish affective bonds that are important pre-requisites to a leader's empowerment. Once these bonds are established, the charismatic leader's paternal authority is legitimated, permitting the leader's exertion of both rewards and sanctions. These controls greatly impact the follower, as they rest in this intimate and familial area of bonding to the leader and to fellow members.

The Progress of Family Violence

The marital ideal of unique, intense and long-term affective support offers a powerful source of inspiration and idealism to those who enter marriage. Two authors state that "[i]t is safe to say that in most cases men enter a relationship with the same romantic notions as women" (Stacey and Shupe, 1983:80). The ideal of the marital relationship, however, is many times broken by the man's developing abuse. Davidson describes the transition from ideal to harsh reality that produces great hardship for the batterer's partner. In marriage the man becomes "the woman's closest relative and her best friend, the focus of her world," and her dislocation is all the more severe when the same man turns "from a beloved husband into a wifebeater." The isolation and commitment of marriage to this man leaves her "no outside world to count on ... no one to save her from her undreamed-of new enemy" (Davidson, 1978:8).

The period of courtship prior to marriage is marked by "increasing possessiveness toward, and isolation of women" (Dobash and Dobash, 1979:85). In this prelude, women narrow their network of friends and generally prepare themselves for dependence on their spouse. Dobash and Dobash state that couples in their study began their lives together on the basis of the ideal of love that I previously mentioned. These authors conclude, however, that the ideal "discourages couples from recognizing the real need to prepare for

marriage" (Dobash and Dobash, 1979:86). The belief that 'love conquers all' motivates the courtship period and future hopes for marriage, but in accepting this belief, couples do not prepare for the day to day exigencies of marriage.

In marriage, the woman in particular becomes "progressively isolated" from the exterior social world with corresponding dependence and subservience on her husband. She is expected to serve his needs, to be a good wife, housekeeper, mother and 'know her place.' "These demands are heavily laced with the ideas of duty and morality and they take on an almost religious character" (Dobash and Dobash, 1979:93). He in turn, is vested with the patriarchal responsibility of household support and--more importantly--control. Dobash and Dobash identify these differential roles as the source of violence and abuse in the home. "[D]ifferential marital responsibility and authority give the husband both the perceived right and the obligation to control his wife's behaviour and thus the means to justify beating her" (Dobash and Dobash, 1979: 93).

Other researchers note the same dynamic of corresponding roles in marital relationships. Moore describes that correspondence as based on traditional roles for masculinity and femininity. These roles juxtapose feminine dependence and subservience against masculine control and dominance. Therefore, when marital partners

experience the disjunction of marital reality such roles permit them a method of recovery. Either partner may assert their sex-role ideal in relation to their partner, thus returning to the traditionalism ideal that prevails in their relationship. In such a scenario, the male may employ abuse to "regain his masculine control" or the female may permit him to "regain control through physical or psychological abuse" (Moore, 1979:17).

The correspondence of couples' traditional and patriarchal roles points to their dependence on each other. Batterers in particular, even though they abuse their partners, exhibit a marked dependence on them. In one study of violent men, those men who were the most 'macho' or traditionally male were at the same time the most dependent on their partners. Further: "[t]he more violence in the relationship, the more dependence" that the men exhibited (Shupe, Stacey & Hazlewood, 1987:36).

Men who show their dependency in such a domineering and violent manner are, as Dobash and Dobash note, exercising their masculine prerogative of control. Gelles notes that the family is a "training ground" for physical forms of control.

> [The family] as a conflict-prone institution serves as a training ground to teach children that it is acceptable: (1) to hit people you love, (2) for powerful people to hit less powerful people, (3) to use hitting to achieve some end or goal, and (4) to hit as an end in itself (Gelles, 1987:16).

Thus men who assault their partners simply follow implicit norms for dealing with intimates. More specifically, though, their exercise of coercive control follows from the widespread power differential between the sexes. The masculine role of paternal domination exists because of women's 'need' for control and direction. Men follow cultural standards, then, which implicitly infantalize women. Like a parent, abusive men justify their violence for "the same reason stronger, larger parents give to explain why they discipline children: because they need it to behave correctly" (Stacey and Shupe, 1983:96). The cliched comment of the parent about to punish a child who says that "I wouldn't do this if I didn't love you" then comes to apply to marital abuse (Moore, 1979:18).

The abuse and violence that emerges in marriage, therefore, results from the man's culturally patterned response to the demands of marriage. Faced by difficulties in the relationship, or personal insecurity, the man reaches for control through chastising his partner. The marriage contract grants the view that "their victims are their own property ... [this p]ossessiveness brings with it the right to exert control." This possessiveness follows a pattern of extreme jealousy and the "belief that they have the right to tell their victims what they want and the victim must comply" (Star, 1982:19). In one study the researchers note this frequent theme of possessiveness, where men control

their partners down to "incredibly small details." One woman that they interviewed spoke of a batterer's treatment of her: "[h]e treated me like a captive doll. He was obsessed with what I looked like ... he'd pick the dress I had to wear, the shoes, even my slip and underwear ... It was like I was his little girl, unable to make my own decisions" (Stacey and Shupe, 1983:49).

Batterers externalize the blame for their abuse. They justify their punitive control by perceived inadequacies or sins of commission on the part of their victim. Most commonly, they 'blame the victim' and claim their partner "made me get mad" (Star, 1982:18). "They rationalized, minimized, and pointed blame away from themselves...'she' was always at fault. 'She made me angry' is the most common excuse for violence heard when men first enter counselling" (Shupe, Stacey & Hazlewood, 1987:38). This rationalization of the victim's fault, I would argue, is in keeping with the punitive rights of the male's paternal authority. Again, batterer's justify abuse as part of their vested powers of authority in the home. Terry Davidson describes her abusive father's apparent self-concept as "almost-God." Her father would sometimes declare that "'I don't care about love ... I want respect'" (Davidson, 1978: 134).

Victims of marital abuse, correspondingly, internalize blame for the assaults. "They believe that they 'cause' the assaults because of something they did ... or because

somehow they did not live up to the expectations set by the assaulter" (Star, 1982: 20). When women shoulder the blame, they experience guilt for the assault that they perceive 'as their fault.' Their sense of guilt and low self-esteem, I argue, follows the cultural norms that say she 'caused' the abuse. Like a wayward child, she has not met the expectations of her own paternal authority (the batterer) and received his punishment to 'correct' her. "The successful socialization of men and women for their positions within marriage has provided a mechanism for both the legitimation and the reinforcement of the marital hierarchy" (Dobash and Dobash, 1979:44).

The marital relationship, therefore, is marked by a disjunction between the ideal and the actuality. Couples who enter the relationship with that ideal especially experience this disruptive transition from romance to reality. When they cope in culturally patterned ways (to reinforce the ideal), their responses involve a correspondence of sex-roles that, many times, lead to abuse. The path of marital abuse, therefore, is not only transitory in nature, but also is progressive. The more traditional the relationship, the more discrepancy in power that emerges between the partners. By following 'normal' role methods of dealing with their relational inadequacies, the partners 'dig themselves' deeper into patterns of abuse and conflict. My assessment of this progressive abuse receives support in the family

violence literature. "[T]he longer that violence continued over months and years, the more serious and dangerous it became" (Stacey and Shupe, 1983:47). "I have found ... the hallmark of violence [is] violence that goes unchecked, spreads ... violence increases in severity and frequency" (Star, 1982:15). "There is a great consensus in the woman abuse literature ... that conjugal violence tends to increase in both its severity and frequency as the battering relationship continues over time" (Okun, 1986:77).

The Progress of Punitive Control in Alternative Religions

In Jacobs's study of deconversion from alternative religions, she argues that intense affective bonds exist between followers and their charismatic leader. She describes these bonds as developing from the desire for religious relationships that replace the failed family ideal. Religious seekers enter alternative religions with the hope of developing intimate and supportive relationships as promised, but not produced, by the nuclear family. The role of the father-figure, in particular, holds much symbolic significance to the family ideal. In fact, Jacobs specifically identifies the patriarchal ideal of the family as much of the impetus behind the rise of the new religions. "The rise of charismatic religious movements thus can be

understood as the desire to experience both the ideal family and the fathering of a protective and loving male authority figure" (Jacobs, 1989:5).

I will set out the progressive nature of charismatic control, therefore, as a process that is very similar to that in marital relationships. I base my comparison on Jacobs's theme of the patriarchal ideal, and will draw extensively from her work to address my own issues. The intent of Jacobs's formulation is to address deconversion and the affective separation from an idealized father figure. I will employ my previous discussion of the marital ideal and the 'transition' couples experience to address the susceptibility of charismatic leaders' followers. I argue that, most particularly, committed followers are like batterers' partners in that they experience greater vulnerability to punitive controls the longer they associate with the charismatic leader.

The first point of correspondence between these two relationships involves the motivation of powerful ideals. In the marital relationship, couples pursue romantic notions of blissful marriage. In the religious relationship, followers also pursue romanticized beliefs in a familial experience, coupled with their desire to 'know God.' Jacobs describes the religious father figure as offering both these ideals: the patriarchal family ideal through religious association, and "the charismatic leader as the personification of God."

(Jacobs, 1989:80). Thus conversion, like marriage, is the stepping stone to realizing an ideal of love in relationship. "The discovery of this idealized god-figure offers the promise of complete and total gratification, the merging of love and spirit in a single relationship" (Jacobs, 1989:124).

Second, in both relationships members discover that their ideals are an unrealistic expectation for the actual relationship. The couple that enters into a relationship hold 'husband and wife' beliefs that partially obscure their individual identities. Once the romance has faded they unfortunately discover each other to be 'imperfect creatures.' Similarly, religious devotees expect a spiritual and thus flawless joining of follower and 'representative of God.' They too discover that their "object of love and devotion proves to be less than the ideal upon which the charismatic bond was established" (Jacobs, 1989:92). The leader "assumes a more human character and less godly demeanour in the minds of devotees" as they acknowledge their subjection to physical and psychological abuse, emotional neglect, and spiritual betrayal (Jacobs, 1989:91-92).

Third, both relationships involve a correspondence of roles. In the marital relationship, couples possess the mutually complementary feminine and masculine roles. These roles produce a power differential where women express

femininity through submission to masculine performance of control and domination. In crises of conflict or difficulty they resort to these roles, yet in so doing, they worsen their difficulties. In the charismatic relationship, therefore, followers submit to the charismatic leader's authority. Further, followers' and leaders' pursuit of their respective roles ('acting out' the norms of submission and authority to realize the relational ideal) produces incidents of abuse. Like abused women, followers who are humble and deferential in the face of punitive sanctions open themselves to further abuses of control.

Fourth, in the charismatic relationship, like a patriarchal marriage, a high degree of mutual dependence exists between leaders and members. Weber already has outlined the dependence of charismatic leaders on their followers. Without followers, charismatic leaders are not special individuals and hold no power. Weber notes that "[i]t is recognition on the part of those subject to authority which is decisive for the validity of charisma" (Weber, 1968:49). Religious followers also are dependent on charismatic leaders. Charismatic leaders symbolize all the hopes and desires of followers' spiritual goals. "[T]he connection to the divine is an especially powerful source of bonding in that the leader has both a symbolic value in his direct link to God and physical manifestation in the ongoing

interpersonal dynamic that exists between follower and spiritual mentor" (Jacobs, 1989:74).

Fifth, in the dependence of their mutual roles, followers and leaders fall in to the same pattern of familial norms for abusive control. This pattern involves the implicit infantalization of the dependent (as in marriage) and the use of physical methods of control. Jacobs notes that their intense relationship to the charismatic leader "is experienced as a primary connection to an omnipotent parent on whom the devotee relies for love, protection, and external control." She also identifies this pattern as "representative of the relationship between the patriarchal father and the powerless dependent child" (Jacobs, 1989:76-77). Jacobs also comments that "in the charismatic Christian groups, physical abuse is often justified by a norm of discipline within the religious family that 'requires' the spiritual father to punish and control his children in order to secure their relationship to God" (Jacobs, 1989:92). Like batterers, charismatic leaders exercise abusive control as a means of chastisement and direction of followers. Followers, like battering victims in traditional families, 'need' these punitive controls for proper 'spiritual guidance.' Thus followers are encouraged to interpret the abuse as the manifestation of leaders' love and concern.

Sixth, I contend that there is a congruence between batterers' possessiveness and charismatic figures' religious demands. Batterers frequently are possessive to the point of making unrealistic demands on their partners, many times to the extreme of monitoring all their activities. Their goal appears to be the constraint of any independent activity by their partner in an attempt to ensure their fidelity. Respondents in Jacobs's study also indicated that they were subjected to "difficult and unrealistic demands" (Jacobs, 1989:46). She reports that 60 percent of her respondents were subjected to psychological abuse by their charismatic leaders. In particular, the leaders "reminded them of how far they were from attaining the ego ideal" (Jacobs, 1989:95-97). Group and leadership pressure also existed for members to discontinue any outside activities and "to give more time and greater loyalty" (Jacobs, 1989:50). Both charismatic leaders and batterers monopolize members' time to ensure complete allegiance.

Seventh, members of the charismatic relationship display a correspondence of blame for abusive control similar to abusive couples. That is, batterers externalize blame by saying that their victims' are at fault and deserved the batterers' punishment. Correspondingly, victims internalize blame and assume the guilt for the abuse, believing their failing caused the punishment. Many of Jacobs's respondents expressed guilt for their

failure to meet the expectations of being the 'perfect disciple' (Jacobs, 1989:115). Like victims of family violence, they shouldered the blame by accepting their normatively prescribed role as dependents. They accepted that they failed the expectations of their 'father figure' and deserved his correction.

Jacobs states that "[t]he formation of affective bonds thus begins with a devotional love that joins the follower to the leader in a relationship of service and obedience" (Jacobs, 1989: 76). Like the traditionally housebound wife, religious duties gradually narrow and constrict the social network of the devotee. The demands of religious practices and 'household maintenance' duties that are very similar to those of a traditional the wife limit the devotee's time and energy. The 'moral demand' of these duties and responsibilities further constrain and restrict the devotee. The religious follower, like the traditional wife, discovers that in the transition of conversion (like marriage), the reality supersedes the ideal.

Summary

The familial pattern of control, therefore, is a progressive one, for followers become more susceptible to negative sanctions as they become more enmeshed in the charismatic relationship. The legitimating groundwork of positive sanctions (intimacy and affective bonding) is

gradualiy superseded by more coercive forms of control. This superseding process is similar to Coser's description of a woman's continued reinvestment in the 'greedy institution' of the family, resulting in a heightening of commitment for personal justification (Coser, 1974:91). Coser's model permits examination of structural entrapment, while the familial charismatic approach of this fifth chapter emphasizes relational and affective entrapment. That affective bonding process involves the progressive disempowerment of the follower with the paternal leader's corresponding empowerment. The ironic result is that those members closest to the charismatic figure are the ones most at risk of negative sanctions.

The charismatic relationship shows that members 'stay' because of the increasing strength of affective bonds to the leader. Furthermore, followers' attempts to be perfect disciples increases their susceptibility to guilt and self-blame. Thus abusive sanctions increase in correlation with these affective bonds, as the power of the leader for such 'informal' sanctions becomes possible. Members endure these negative sanctions and 'stay' when the strength of their emotional attachment and own affirmation of dependence to the leader justifies those punitive controls. Like the abused female victim of family violence, abused members often perceive such sanctions both as proper punishment for

their crimes and as evidence of the controller's paternal concern.

Chapter VI Conclusion

Overview

The concluding chapter explores the implications of my familial abuse approach for the sociology of AROs. I argue that current discussions which deny the possibility of widespread abusive social control in AROs ignore that such practices commonly occur in other social institutions. I also address possible areas of further research. The future application of my perspective through such potential studies will provide important refinements to the theoretical issues addressed in this thesis.

Discussion and Summary

Each of the theoretical positions on family abuse that I reviewed contributes towards understanding coercive dynamics in alternative religions. The argument for this comparison rested in the acknowledged familial aspects of AROs--aspects that researchers characterized as an idyllic model of family life. My comparison to the family is motivated by 'darker' similarities of social isolation, a strong controller, and constraining affective bonds that develop in an intimate atmosphere. The development of more 'negative' attributes in family studies breaks the idealized cultural stereotype, but these attributes are not yet applied to 'familiality' in new religions. I propose this

comparison not only to enhance the familial analogy, but also to develop a more theoretically grounded understanding of coercion and abuse in these groups.

In my introduction I noted that metaphors provide opportunities to 'see' organizations in new ways. The changes in both societal and sociological perspectives on the 'family' provide an example of how 'ways of seeing' determine perceptions and understandings of abuse in that organization. Societal representations of the nuclear family formerly depicted this organization as one with almost mystical and religious importance. Popular imagery upheld the male-centred household--with subservient and dependent 'housewife' and obedient children--as the cultural ideal. In that idealization, traditionalists invoked these relationships and the structural position of relative isolation of the family as necessary to a 'healthy' society. Each individual in the family hierarchy purportedly experienced security and affective supports because of this isolated arrangement. Furthermore, the traditional view identified the private security and structured relationships of the family as the moral basis of societal order. Traditionalism justified orderly patriarchal familial experience as both a 'mystical' support for other organizations and as proper training ground for well-socialized persons. Supporters of this idealized image declared that instances of abuse or conflict only resulted

from abberations, particularly if individual family members failed to follow the tenets of the ideal.

New challenges to the traditional image of 'family' changed this characterization quite radically. To begin with, various observers attacked the hierarchy of relationships within the family as structured inequality rather than structured security. These critics declared that the housewife's dependent status was a source of widespread exploitation and disenfranchisement of women. They also stated that childrens' secondary status in the family directly contributed to much of youths' rebelliousness. Parental domination set the stage for the misunderstanding and separation of generations, as most shockingly evident in the turmoil of the 1960s. Not only did a new view challenge myths of the family, but also it redefined the very nature of 'family' itself. Current conceptions of 'family' acknowledge the essential ambiguity of attempts to define it, and incorporate permutations such as the extended family, nuclear family, communal family, homosexual family, single parent family, and blended family. Most particularly, the reconceptualization of the family included declaration of its coercive status. "[T]he group to which most people look for love and gentleness is also the most violent civilian group in our society" (Straus, 1980:24). This recasting of the familial myth actually declared that the violence and abuse were in fact consequences of idealized

structures and norms for 'family.' Not only did the myth obscure the reality of abuse and power differentials, but also it contributed to those same injustices.

I outline these contrasting conceptualizations of the family to emphasize the 'social construction' of abuse and power issues. Like the family, various observers regard alternative religions in different ways. Popular images portray many AROs as manipulative 'brainwashing' institutions akin to political POW camps. Sociologists largely have found this popular characterization a negatively value-laden description of AROs. They also use 'characterizations,' however, that still are 'metaphors' in asserting that alternative religions 'are like' another form of social organization. Besides the familial characterization, scholars have employed analysis of AROs as exchange systems, businesses, and novel sub-cultures (see Bainbridge and Stark, 1985:171-188). Those approaches, as a rule, gloss over the possibility of abusive power relations.

The familial abuse perspective for isolated communal AROs incorporates an accepted body of empirical and theoretical literature to explain the existence of intragroup violence and control. Most other approaches or conceptualizations 'construct' alternative religions as non-abusive, again likely out of concern to counteract the popular notion of 'supernatural' processes of thought reform. In drawing from understandings of everyday abuse and

domination, the familial abuse perspective does not deem ARO control practices a necessary result of "deviant" social norms or values, but recognizes these controls as products of already identified social processes. The emphasis rests on the 'irony' of intense 'familial' relations, and on the degree of control held by and accorded to the leader. Thus allegations of abuse in AROs need not emerge from an unnecessarily pejorative outlook on these groups, since the literature on family violence suggests that such behaviour is widespread in 'normal' social life.

Key to the 'revisionist' analysis and criticism of familial dysfunction is the power differential of hierarchical family roles. This same theme of a power differential, involving the empowerment of controllers and the disempowerment of dependents, emerges from my familial abuse perspective for AROs. In each analysis (structural, systems, and feminist) of AROs, the answer to 'why do abused members stay?' involves variations on this empowerment/ disempowerment issue.

From the **structural** viewpoint, norms and standards of intimacy and privacy legitimate interpersonal violence and abuse. The desire of ARO members for both idealized religious experiences and relationships causes them to endure abuse along the path towards their ideal. Further, as Coser points out, these same norms and standards often are employed by a controller to ensure restriction and control

of dependents. Thus religious followers are disempowered in two ways. First, in subjecting themselves to the norms of intimacy and commitment to the religious institute, they are effectively disempowered in relation to the organization and its standards. Coser in particular stresses institutional power, and describes disempowerment of members as occurring especially through organizational 'demands' of structured debt, obligation, and isolation. Secondly, followers are disempowered in relation to the religious leader who, like a master of servants or a traditional husband, employs structural demands for personal/institutional benefit.

The **systems** perspective emphasizes that AROs maintain followers' commitment through developing a separate world of meaning to confront and contrast with the outside. It insists that followers experience mutual loyalty to 'insiders' and mutual paranoia of 'outsiders.' Followers effectively disempower themselves through total enmeshment of relationships and allegiances, to the extent that no other point of reference has any validity. In this manner, they regard almost any form of interactional devices (even abusive ones) as valid markers of difference from the outside world.

Again, two forms of disempowerment emerge. First, followers mutually disempower each other in negating the option to follow or believe in 'outside' standards or ways. Correspondingly, they empower each other to use the group

standard's of behaviour for potentially abusive mutual influence and direction. Second, followers are disempowered in relation to their leader, whom they permit to formulate and manipulate the group's pattern of interactions. The end result is that their encompassing world of meaning completely enmeshes them and isolates them from the allegedly threatening outside.

The **feminist** perspective asserts that the factor of the leader's erratic and wilful power constrains followers' independent actions. The charismatic leader's authority to upset the standards of 'this present world' empowers them to behave in capricious and constantly unpredictable ways. In fact, followers expect charismatic authority to provide novel rules as guides for behaviour and validation of the leader's uniqueness. The leader's power of erratic control disempowers followers both cognitively and emotionally. First, followers experience cognitive disempowerment, as the leader's ability to bring out ever-new revelations defies followers' rational prediction of 'correct' doctrine and behaviour. Second, followers experience emotional disempowerment as the leader alternates between apparent love and apparent emotional rejection of them. Followers' emotions vacillate in corresponding responses of hurt or anger and reciprocated emotional attachment. In both forms of 'feminist' disempowerment, the leader's power rests in

the constant ability to set the rules for interaction and belief.

Finally, in the chapter on **charismatic control**, the leader's domination over followers explicitly involves empowerment/disempowerment. Again, the model of the traditional marital relationship suggests the pattern for progressive disempowerment in AROs. The progressive pattern of control in traditional marriages involves transition from a courting romanticism to the practical difficulties of marital relations. Partners in the relationship respond to those difficulties by recourse to traditional sex-role behaviour. In so doing, they maintain the inequality of the male-dominated home and continue the problems, conflicts, and abuse generated by that structuring of relationships.

The pattern of progressive control is similar in AROs. A charismatic leader and followers enter into an idealized religious relationship. When they encounter the reality of everyday concerns and problems, they retreat to hierarchically ordered 'guru-follower' roles. Thus the leader continues to hold greater power over the follower, and the leader's empowerment continues to progress in long-term commitment. Followers who 'stay' entrench themselves further in dependence to the leader, to the extreme of legitimating that person's charismatic authority for punitive forms of correction and guidance.

The assembled components of this 'familial abuse perspective' readily provide comparison to empowerment/disempowerment processes within charismatically led alternative religions. Alternative religious organizations provide a uniquely similar environment for development of the same 'ironies' of affective bonding and coercive control as emerge in the family. Few other social settings exist that involve the immersion of the 'total' person within an environment of minimal external social control and intense internal group control. Like the family, the element of 'voluntary' personal commitment ('internalized' control) frequently enmeshes individuals even further within group affiliation.

Some researchers of AROs might charge that my choice of the family is not as appropriate as contrasts to other 'officially recognized' coercive institutions where institutional power and leader power dominate members. The comparison to the family, however, more aptly conveys the complexity of abusive control processes as they occur in these groups. The familial abuse analogy clearly differentiates AROs from 'thought reform' organizations yet also permits understandings of power differentials that most sociological characterizations of AROs obscure.

Directions for Research

I direct my familial abuse perspective to proposing a 'manner' of examining and understanding long-term commitment of ARO members. My perspective is, as such, not a specific theory with concrete statements of relationships between variables. I do not assert a specific causal process whereby I relate empirical events or structures to each other in specific manners. Rather, I present a general framework for analysis of alternative religions. Each of my separate approaches, in fact, permit individual study through the concepts, propositions, and findings of that particular family violence theory. The familial abuse perspective encourages a researcher to translate familial concepts to alternative religions, test the propositions of familial theory using these concepts, and compare the findings of research to both ARO and family research. The present work is prefatory to such an attempt, and follows Morgan's statement that "theories, like readings, are interpretations of reality" (Morgan, 1986:12). In offering a familial abuse interpretation of AROs, I lay the groundwork for potential theories in this area.

The application of the metaphorical method of analysis to alternative religions involves both deductive and inductive forms of reasoning. The familial metaphor is deductive in the sense that one employs the family violence research as a given set of proposed relationships to study

alternative religions. Research begins with this material as a body of propositions to be tested in the field of ARO research. The familial metaphor also is inductive in providing a way of exploration in research. Each of the three outlined family violence theories may be used in a 'competing' fashion to encourage exploration of the research at hand. The 'mutual testing' of applying each approach to an ARO is an inductive method that permits selection of the best approach, a hybridization of approaches, or even acknowledgment of 'paradoxes' where more than one approach 'fits.'

A possible research project involves a content analysis of familial imagery in theological material that justifies disempowerment of devotees. For example, a researcher would apply the structural approach, with its emphasis on moral and affective 'servant' obligations, to the study of doctrinal writings. Such servile images encourage members to receive direction and punishment by religious authority as expressions of familial concern.

A second avenue of research would study transcribed interviews of former or current members of alternative religions with attention to patriarchal disempowerment of members. In this example, a 'feminist control' approach would draw particular attention to a leader's prophetic authority. If, for example, devoted followers regard new revelations by the leader as 'God's word,' then it is highly

likely that the leader's prophecies hold indisputable power. In this sort of context, unexpected and sudden commands only confirm for followers the divine authorship of charismatic leader's directives. This sort of study would incorporate the analysis of a leader's relationships to followers with attention to emotional aspects as well as the leader's commands on doctrine and behaviour. Such a study especially would address the dynamics of religiously justified dependency of followers on their leader.

This feminist analysis also could include the exploration of possible escalating punitive sanctions that supersede affective loyalty and bonds. Research of this nature would look at members' accounts of how and when a leader metes out punishment or discipline. The study of progressive control (as discussed in my fifth chapter) contrasts the extent or nature of punishments from early in a devotees' career to later membership. A researcher would compare members with the longest-term affiliations to 'novices' in order to determine how or whether punitive controls 'progress' over the life of a devotee. Lower-level devotees contrasted with higher-level ones would allow one to control for a degree of institutional power deflecting some punishments.

A final proposal for future study could examine patterns of interaction within alternative religions. The everyday 'culture' of communal life reveals the degree of

rejection and fear of outsiders and concomitant rigorous expectations for insiders. I suggest that in a study of this type, family systems analysis needs an extensively descriptive understanding of members' interactions. Participant observation or interviews with former/current members would particularly assist a researcher in this regard. Such methods for data collection aid a researcher to see interaction 'close-up' and develop a fine-grained picture of relational patterns. The key to a study of this kind would be to determine the manner in which community interaction patterns provide familial security and so legitimate abuse and power differentials.

The familial abuse research, like much of ARO research, is oriented towards descriptive analysis and conceptualizations. The rigorous quantification and precise definitions attempted by other streams of social science research are less predominant. This style of research emerges, at least in part, from the socially private nature of both AROs and families. Both institutions reject obtrusive forms of research for similar reasons of desired privacy. In Goffman's terms, long-term association within familial groups largely consists of 'back region' behaviour (Goffman, 1959:112). Researchers then are usually constrained to distant, approximate methods for measuring and understanding interactions within familial organizations. They often depend on written documentation

(diaries, newsletters, correspondence, newspapers) or interviews with individuals who form non-representative samples (such as battered women who flee and ex-members of AROs).

This present work reflects the research limitations of familial abuse studies in relying on essentially broad and descriptive categories and inferences. There are potential research hypotheses, however, that my cumulated discussion of familial abuse suggests for the dynamics of 'staying' in AROs. I list these here in order to offer more explicit formulations of my perspective for future research.

Structural Theory

Hypothesis 1. a) The greater the collective adherence to norms of familial allegiance and social seclusion and b) the greater the structural demands of service and obligation to the group, then c) the greater likelihood that ARO members will stay in abusive religions.

Systems Theory

Hypothesis 2. a) The greater the collective fear of contaminating 'outside' influences and b) the greater the amount that unique familial interactions are asserted to identify and protect 'inside' members, then c) the greater likelihood that ARO members will stay in abusive religions.

Feminist Theory

Hypothesis 3. a) The greater the doctrinal variability of a leader's edicts and b) the greater the leader's variability of 'love or punishment' behaviours towards followers, then c) the greater likelihood that ARO members will stay in abusive religions.

Charismatic Control

Hypothesis 4. a) The greater the intimacy and idealization of leader-follower roles in ARO doctrine and b) the longer individuals are committed members, then c) the greater likelihood that ARO members will stay in abusive religions.

These hypotheses represent the major conclusions of my familial abuse perspective. Since they emerge from a discussion, they remain mere hypotheses that demand empirical validation. Testing of hypotheses, further comparisons of familial abuse findings to AROs, and continued theoretical comparison of the two organizations will expand upon the directions that I provide in this work. I expect that further work will illustrate my theoretical claim that both AROs and families involve a unique combination of intimate bonds and abusive controls. Research with this balanced perspective will be neither naively supportive nor aggressively denigrating of those groups and individuals under scrutiny.

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